'ABD AL-KARÎM AL-JÎLÎ

UNIVERSAL MAN

Extracts
Translated with Commentary
by
TITUS BURCKHARDT

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TITUS BURCKHARDT

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Introduction

THE texts from which we offer this translation are extracts from the celebrated book *al-insân al-kâmil* ('Universal Man') by the Sufi 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî. They refer to some of the fundamental aspects of the Sufi doctrine.

'Abd al-Karîm ibn Ibrâhîm al-Jîlî, who was born in 1366 (the year 767 of the Hegira) at Jil in the Baghdad district and whose master was the Sheikh Sharaf ad-dîn Ismâïl ibn Ibrâhîm al-Jabartî, is one of those who continue the metaphysical teaching of the 'Very Great Master' *(ash-sheikh al-akbar)*, Muhyi-d-dîn ibn 'Arabî. If sometimes he contradicts the latter, it is only in the form, not fundamentally; he himself, moreover, reminds us that "all the contradictory truths are united in the Truth" (One, *al-haqq)*.

Compared to the teaching of Ibn 'Arabî, that of Jîlî is in certain respects more systematic; he contains a more apparent dialectical architecture, which is rather an advantage for the reader who is unfamiliar with this aspect of Sufism.

We reproduce here the first chapters of *al-insân al-kâmil*, leaving aside, however, certain parts which digress from the principal theme and which would necessitate commentaries too lengthy. These chapters represent only a quarter of the entire work, but they contain the quintessence, in respect both of the doctrine and the spiritual applications.

It seems to us justifiable to call Sufism 'Muslim Mysticism', on condition, however, that the expression 'mysticism' is given its original and precise meaning[1]. Sufism has as its objective a knowledge whose intimate nature is 'mystery', which cannot, therefore, be communicated completely by the word; this in no

1. It is from an effect of religious individualism, springing from the 'Renaissance', and also, no doubt, by a certain conflict as a result of rationalism, that the expression 'mysticism' has lost its precision. Nevertheless, if abusive meaning has been given to it, its original sense has never been excluded. In any case, if Evagrius the Pontic, Gregory the Sinaite, Maximus the Confessor and Master Eckhart – to cite but a few examples among many others – are 'Mystics', so equally, are Sufis. Only the word 'mysticism' is applicable exclusively to a very special and relatively late variant in Christian spirituality. We refer the reader to what we have said on this subject in our *'Introductions aux doctrines esoteriques d'Islam'*. Paris, 1969, Dervy-Livres.

way means that it is vague in its manifestations; on the contrary, it radiates in the human order according to strict laws. Logic would be unable to circumscribe it; in return, true mystical knowledge is sovereign with regard to reason and can make use of this latter to retrace, like an inversed projection, the realities which it attains in a direct manner and beyond any mental contour.

Its organ is not the brain, but the heart where the knowledge and the being of man coincide. Outside this centre, which is inaccessible to thought, all perception appears as distinct from the nature of its object; it is only in the heart that man is that which he knows, and knows that which he is.

However, where knowledge joins its own being, and where the Being knows Itself in Its immutable actuality, one can no longer talk of man. So far as the spirit immerses in this state it identifies itself, not to individual man, but to Universal Man *(al-insân al-kâmil)*, who constitutes the internal Unity of all creatures. Universal Man is the all; it is by a transposition of the individual to the universal that one calls him 'man'; essentially, he is the eternal prototype, Divine and unlimited, of all beings.

Universal Man is not really distinct from God; he is like the face of God in his creatures. By union with him, the spirit unites with God.[2] Now, God is all and at the same time above all. He is at once immanent and transcendent; equally the spirit, in this state of Union, is united to creatures in their essences, by a direct intuition; at the same time it is like a diamond that mixes with nothing and is penetrated by nothing, because it participates in the Divine Reality which is sufficient unto Itself.

Unitive Knowledge may be translated to a certain extent at the level of distinctive consciousness, be it that Its ray suddenly transpierces the veil of the latter, be it that Its ever-present actuality renders transparent the things which offer themselves to human experience.

Consequently, one may say that the Sufi knows everything, while he is ignorant of much, and one may say that he is ignorant of the things of this world, although he knows them all in their essence. In any case, the quality of Omniscience never will belong to man, whatever the degree of his spiritual 'transparency' with regard to the Divine Light.

[2] Christian theology says as much of the Logos.

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Since union with God is at once knowledge and being, both the one and the other of these two aspects must be reflected in the soul of he who aspires to Union. It is the idea, the doctrine, which corresponds to the aspect of 'knowledge', whereas the 'being' will be reflected in a qualitative attitude of the soul, that is to say in its interior beauty.

The idea – or the doctrinal comprehension – is the indispensable premise of all spiritual realisation; however, it is not directly operative with regard to human substance which will be the base of all spiritual work, for it is situated in the soul like an unextended point and never will belong to man completely.

As for the interior beauty, which includes simplicity, amplitude and harmony or balance, it already is the fruit of a divine touch, although it has but a subjective reality and it never can claim the objective and general extent of the idea.

It is this beauty of the soul which makes itself apparent humanly in the Universal or Perfect Man.

The union is realised by anticipation in the symbol which is at once the meaning and quality of the being. Universal Man is himself the total symbol of God.

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The macrocosmic 'form'[3] of Universal Man is that multitude of knowing subjects whose innumerable visions co-ordinate, according to a single logical continuity, that which constitutes the world; – "Thou wilt see no lacks in the creation of the Compassionate; look again; dost thou see fissures there?" (Koran LXVII,2); – or – according to a complementary point of view – it is the inexhaustible variety of objects of knowledge which are integrated into a single truth, the unique essence of all intelligences; – "We have not created the sky and the earth and all that is between the two except by Truth" (Koran XV,85; XLVI,2).

Each being has of the world a sufficient and homogeneous 'vision' and all these multiple 'worlds' form a single tissue of

[3] By 'form' (*ṣurah*), the Arabic authors do not necessarily mean a whole defined by its limits; all that which represents a synthesis of qualities is equally 'form'. – See *'Introduction aux doctrines esoteriques de l'Islam'*, page 82, note 1.

reality. Existence includes an 'objective' unity, which is clouded by the variety of subjects, in the same way that it involves a 'subjective' unity, which hides the diversity of objects.

With regard to its internal unity, the cosmos is, then, like a single being; – "We have recounted all things in an evident prototype" (Koran XXXVI). If one calls him the 'Universal Man', it is not by reason of an anthropomorphic conception of the universe, but because man represents, on earth, its most perfect image.[4]

But the idea of the Universal Man, before everything else, arises from a perspective closely related to spiritual realisation, of which he will be as the permanent model. He appears as an aspect which withdraws gradually as one approaches him, until his disappearance in Divine Unity. It is in this sense that one says that nobody will meet God before meeting the Prophet.

The contemplative Moslem aspires to no other goal than knowledge of God; it is Divine Unity that he constantly calls to mind; but he knows that he will never reach God as an individual, and that God pours out His Graces fully only on Universal Man, who alone is all that which God, on looking at His creation, called "very good".[5] – In an analogous sense, the Buddhist aspires to Nirvâna "for the happiness of all beings" and must realise the effacement of the individual in the 'innocent' and primordial totality of the Universe.

For the contemplative Moslem, the qualitative synthesis of things, which is also the Universal Mediator, is manifested most directly in the person of the Prophet Muhammed. It is in asking for the effusion of graces on him that the 'poor towards God' *(al-faqîr ilâ-llâh)* prepares himself to receive the Divine Light which gushes out unceasingly from the Divine Obscurity towards the 'best of creation' *(khayr al-khalq)*.[6]

As an illustration of this spiritual attitude, we quote the celebrated prayer of the Sufi 'Abd as-Salâm ibn Mashîsh,[7] the

[4] See *'Introduction aux doctrines esoteriques de l'Islam'*, chapter on 'Perfect Man'.

[5] It is there, moreover, the meaning of the name Muhammed ('Glorified').

[6] Muhammed assumes then, for Sufism, the aspects which recall both the role of Christ and that of the Virgin in Christianity. The different traditional systems may be compared to regular geometric figures inscribed in the same circle, for they have the same Divine centre and are inscribed in a same totality of human possibilities.

[7] Sometimes one comes across the orthography of ibn Bashîsh. This saint lived in the twelfth century of the Christian era in the mountains of Jbâla (Morocco).

teacher of Abu-l-Hasan ash-Shâdhîlî; "Oh God, bless him from whom is derived all spiritual secrets, from whom the lights pour out, in whom were united the truths, and in whom were placed the sciences of Adam, so that he rendered the creatures powerless: the intelligences stray where he is concerned, and none of us understand him, neither his forefathers nor his followers.[8] The gardens of the celestial worlds *(al-malakût)* are flowered by his beauty. The reservoirs of the supraformal worlds *(al-jabarût)* overflow from the flux of his lights.[9] There is nothing which does not carry his seal, for without the mediator, everything which depends on him disappears . . . Oh God, he is Thy secret who englobes all and who demonstrates Thee, and Thy supreme veil before Thee between Thy two Hands. Oh God, join me to his kindred, judge me according to him, and make me learn by a knowledge which will cure me of the influences of ignorance and quench me with the waters of grace. Carry me in his way towards Thy presence, protecting me by Thy help. Strike through me the vanity so that I annihilate it.[10] Pour me in the seas of Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*[11], draw me back from the sloughs of Union *(at-tawḥîd)*[12] and drown me in the Essence *(al-'ayn)* of the Ocean of Divine Solitude *(al-waḥdah)*, so that I neither see nor hear nor feel except through It . . ."

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In conformity with the Koran, the central idea of Sufism is Divine Unity. Consequently, all that which Unity includes logically may be transposed in the Divine Reality, with the exception, however, of purely arithmetical or quantitative unity which is the inverse reflection of principial Unity.[13]

[8] This can be said of all Divine messengers *(rasul)* in so far as they manifest the Universal Mediator which no human intelligence would be capable of understanding.

[9] An allusion to the doctrine of 'overflowing' *(al-fayd)* of the Being illuminating the relative possibilities which constitute the world.

[10] An allusion to the Koranic verse; "He will beat vanity by truth and it will annihilate it". XXI,18.

[11] The expression *al-aḥadiyah* is employed here in a far more general sense than with Jîlî.

[12] The question is the confusion of the created and the uncreated and all the heresies which flow from it. The author intentionally employs the expression *at-tawḥid* which usually denotes the true doctrine of Unity.

[13] One must not consider Divine Unity as an arithmetic unity, in the same

On the one hand, Unity expresses undifferentiation, the 'non-duality' or 'non-otherness'; on the other hand, it is the very basis of the distinction, because it is by the 'unique' nature of a being – or a thing – that it distinguishes itself from others. Because of this 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî gives the name Unity, *(al-aḥadiyah)* to the Supreme aspect of God, which to tell the truth, is not an 'aspect' but the absence of all aspects or of all distinctivity, whereas he designates to the name Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)* this first aspect of the Divinity which is at once the synthesis of all the realities and their principle of distinction, since It is Unique in each and Unique in all.[14]

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The two Divine 'dimensions' of transcendence and immanence correspond in a certain manner, to Divine Unity and Divine Unicity, for Unity is exempt from all direct grasp; one can only comprehend it by successive negations, whereas Divine Unicity appears in the very qualities of things. Every positive quality, moreover, is in itself inexhaustible and incommensurable with regard to limits which it assumes by chance in such or such an object. Consequently, he who 'savours' a Quality in his immediate reality, reaches thereby in a certain manner, the ontological and infinite Source of all the Qualities, the Being, and he sees the limited and individual aspect of things as a vain an illusory shell, incomparable to that which the same things imply in the qualitative and unlimited. It is thus that the contemplation of the qualities, which are immanent in the cosmos, rejoins the Divine transcendence by the aspect of incomparability: this means that each pure Quality is all, whereas the contingent manifestations are, so to speak, nothing. The Sufi Muhammed al Ḥarrâq[15] says in this sense: "I have drunk but a sîngle drop, and I have understood!"

Only he who has already realised a qualitative aspect of his own soul can realise the Universal Qualities. As for the comprehension of Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*, it implies the annihilation of the ego.

way that one must not conceive the Trinity of Christian Theology as a multiplicity inherent to the Divine Nature.

[14] See *'Introduction aux doctrines esoteriques d'Islam'*, chapter: *'Des Aspects de l'Unite'*.

[15] A Moroccan Sheikh of the early 19th Century.

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The doctrine of 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî on the Divine Realities which are unfolded in the universe and summarised in a way in the 'Perfect Man' or 'Universal Man' *(al-insân al-kâmil)*, has as a starting point the classic distinction, in Moslem theology, between the Essence *(adh-dhât)* and the Divine Qualities *(aṣ-ṣifât)*. The Essence is the absolute and infinite nature of God, incomprehensible, as such, for man. The Divine Qualities are inferred from positive and virtually unlimited aspects of the universe, and it is by virtue of them that God may be described in an analogical manner. Like the Qualities which are all attributed to a single subject, which is their infinite Essence, they converge towards the inexpressible; on the other hand, in so far as they are distinguishable the ones from the others, they constitute the 'thread' of the material, while the 'weave' will be the 'materiality' of the world, in the widest sense of this term, that is to say the apparent and ephemeral coherence of things.

The Essence is God in so far as He has no 'aspects', being Himself neither the 'object' nor the 'subject' of any knowledge. The Qualities on the other hand are the 'aspects' by which God reveals Himself *(tajalla)* in a relative manner. If the Essence is unknowable for created beings, it is because, in the face of the Absolute and Infinite Reality, the relative being does not exist; the Essence is, however, knowable to each degree of reality, in the sense that It is the intimate reality of all knowledge. God knows Himself through Himself in Himself without any internal distinction; and He knows Himself through Himself in the universe according to the infinitely varied relative worlds.

In the contemplative order, the Qualities are like the rays which emanate from the Divine Sun, too dazzling Himself to be looked at face to face, and which traverse all the relative visions by which man, by a certain manner, approaches God. They are the increated contents of created things[16]. It is thus, at least, that

[16] In the Sufi perspective, the Qualities or the Divine Names play the same role as the 'Increated Energies' in the Palamite theology. Cf. Vladimir Lossky: *'Essai sur la Theologie Mystique de l'Eglise de l'Orient'*. We already have expressed the Theory of the Essence and the Divine Qualities in our *'Introduction aux doctrines esoteriques de l'Islam'*, in the Chapter *'The Aspects of Unity'*; however, as this theory constitutes one of the fundamentals of Sufi doctrine we are not afraid to return to it, at the risk of partly repeating ourselves.

the analogy presents itself on the human side, for in principle they are the created things which constitute the virtual contents of the Divine Qualities, these containing the world like a lesser reality.

For rational knowledge, the Divine Qualities remain incomprehensible as such; they are not conceived except in their mental traces, and these appear as 'abstractions' with regard to concrete things. In fact the universal Qualities are really 'non-existent' in the individual plane, although individual objects render them explicit, rather like the colours contained in the white light of the sun – where they are not directly perceptible, – manifest themselves by virtue of matter which filters them and reflects them.

For the intellectual intuition, on the contrary, it is the individual things which have only the nature of provisional conceptions, whereas the Divine Qualities exist positively. According to the image employed above, one can affirm that the colours exist independently of their occasional supports. The Sufis go so far as to say that the world is 'abstract' or 'conceptual' *(ma'qûl)*, whereas the Divine Irradiation in the perfect Qualities is immediately 'perceptible' *(maḥsûs)*; by that they mean that the individual things have no autonomous existence, this being only like an idea superimposed onto the Divine Reality, which alone 'is'. The sensory perception, then, symbolises the intuition, of which it is like an inverse image. Sometimes, it is even the most 'elementary' sensations which will symbolize the supraformal intuition, because they lean towards a fusion of subject with object; it is thus that the Divine Breath[17] – the Holy Ghost – is sometimes called the 'Perfume' of God; it is by the Universal Qualities, says Jîlî, that one 'savours' the Divinity.

To return to the symbolism of the colours, we would say that the contemplation of the Divine Qualities is like the sight of the rainbow, the inverse image of the sun on the inconsistent veil of the rain.[18] It is on turning one's back to the sun that one looks at the rainbow; in the same way, the vision of God, being reflected by Its 'colours' in the universe, is operated by virtue of the Divine

[17] On the symbolism of the 'Divine Breath' see *'Introduction'*, p.69-73.

[18] The iris contains many analogies with the Divine Qualities; it is thus that the colours of the rainbow show an unlimited variety; however, they can be summarised in a few fundamental colours, in the same way that the infinity of the Divine Qualities may be re-established to a limited number of types. The Divine Beauty, for example, includes many modalities always different and unexpected, whereas the Beauty always will be distinguished from the Power.

Light, without one being able to contemplate face to face the source of this.

In fact, the pure and infinite Essence never can become the 'object' of contemplation *(mushâhadah)* nor of meditation *(tafakkur)*. So the Prophet says: "Do not meditate on the Divine Essence; meditate on the Qualities and on the Grace of God."[19] The Essence is known only by an identification *(tahqîq dhâtî)* which abolishes all 'distinctivity'.

The Universal Qualities are in their turn purely virtual with regard to the Essence, for they represent, in their manifestation, so many relations *(nisab)* of the Essence with the realities apparently other than It, therefore inconsistent with regard to the pure Reality.

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After having written that the Essence communicates Itself to us by Its Qualities, while remaining inaccessible in Its pure Reality, 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî affirms the inverse, that is to say the Essence alone is immediately recognizable: "For he who realises the Divine Truth, it is the Quality which he cannot attain nor integrate as such, contrarily to that which takes place for the Essence, which he can attain, in the sense that he recognizes It as the Divine Essence, whereas he does not know all the universal plenitude of the Qualities; the Essence of God is therefore evident to him, but the Qualities are not in an immediate manner . . ." The plenitude of a Quality implies an infinity of aspects, that is to say all its manifestations or applications; on the other hand, to know essentially a Quality, is to integrate it in the Essence from which, in a way, it emanates: "The integration proceeds from the Essence, having the perception of the Essence by Itself . . . It is, therefore, recognizable only as the Essence and it is unrecognizable as the Qualities, for the indefinity belongs only to the Qualities of the Essence and not to the Essence as such . . ."

All differentiated knowledge supposes a certain duality of the

[19] All the sentences of the Prophet which we cite here, or are to be found inserted in Jîlî's text, are of those which one meets most often in Sufi books. We do not give any references as we do for the Koranic passages, because they do not form part of a sacred book. In works on theology or Muslim law, one generally indicates the chain of those who have transmitted such a sentence until its written divulgence. For the European reader, a reference of this nature would be of little use.

knower and the known, so that the one can never embrace the other entirely; the essential knowledge on the contrary is immediate and 'a priori': it implies no duality and no process. For differentiated knowledge, the Essence is not. For essential knowledge, on the contrary, differentiated knowledge is not really knowledge, in the same way that its object is not Reality Itself.

The relationship is therefore reversible; so Jîlî writes further on: "We may talk of these ideas in quite a different manner, which in appearance contradicts that which we have just said, but in appearance only; . . . the Qualities are, in a general manner, definite ideas, whereas the Essence is an indefinable thing; now, definite ideas are closer to the perception than an indefinable thing. And if it is true that one must deny the cognoscibility of the Qualities, there is no way to know the Essence by any relationship whatever . . ."

It is thus for the knowledge of the Essence as for the knowledge of the 'Ipseity' *(al-huwiyah)* of man. There is moreover a fundamental identity between the one and the other: "If the servant . . . discovers himself, he recognizes that the Divine Essence is his own essence, so that he really attains the Essence and knows It, as the Prophet says; 'He who knows himself, knows his Lord,' but it remains for him to know all that which depends on the Essence . . . in the matter of Its own Qualities . . ."

Although the knowledge of the Essence does not contain, like the assimilation of the Qualities, a gradual process, there are nevertheless, in the contemplative way, two complementary ways of approach towards God: the one ascribes to the Divine Qualities and from there to the 'personal' Divinity which is manifested in the Universe; the other ascribes to the 'Ipseity' of man, to his intimate essence which identifies itself mysteriously to the Divine Essence.[20]

The Qualities are the object of contemplation. The 'Ipseity' cannot be contemplated; it is known by identification. The Divine Qualities have a 'taste', whereas the Essence – or the Ipseity – is without any taste. The Qualities have 'colours' whereas the

[20] The impersonal Essence transcends the 'Personal God' who reveals Himself by the combination of the Divine Qualities and Activities with regard to the creature. But it is certainly not by a mental abstraction that the Personal Divinity can be transcended, for it goes without saying that It is immensely more real than any mental view of the Essence.

Essence is colourless like white light, or more exactly like the obscurity at the heart of the light.

It is by the irradiation of the Divine Qualities – or the Divine Names – that the contemplative passes from one spiritual state *(ḥâl)* to the other; the essential identification transcends all the 'states' *(aḥwal)*.

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To each Divine Quality there corresponds a name *(ism)*. Now, the Qualities are of an inexhaustible variety; it is then by analogy with the Qualities known and named in the Koran that one attributes symbolically to each Quality a Name, and that one talks of the 'innumerable Divine Names'. Principially, the 'Names' designate so many permanent 'aspects' of the Essence, and it is in this sense that one must understand the logical opposition between the 'Essence' and the totality of the 'Names'.

One may distinguish however, between the 'Names of the Essence' *(asmâ dhâtiyah)* and 'Qualitative Names' *(asmâ ṣîfâtiyah)*; it is that the former, such as the One *(al-aḥad)*, the Most Holy *(al-quddûs)*, the Independent *(aṣ-ṣamad)*, express the Divine Transcendence and refer, then more exclusively to the Essence, whereas the Qualitative Names, like the Clement *(ar-rahmân)*, the Generous *(al-karîm)*, the Peaceful *(as-salâm)*, etc, express at once the transcendence and the immanence of God. The latter Names include, moreover, also those of the Divine Activities *(al-af'âl)* like He - who - gives - life *(al-muḥyi)*, He - who - gives - death *(al-mumît)*, etc.

As innumerable as they are, the Divine Names always may be collected in a definite number of types, to which correspond the groups of revealed Names.

One calls the Names of the Divine Perfections the 'Most Beautiful Names' or the 'Names of Beauty', for the Koran says: "The most beautiful names *(asmâ al-ḥusnâ)* are God's" (VII, 179); "God, there is no divinity but He; to Him belong the most beautiful names." (XX, 7); "Invoke God or invoke the Clement; by whatever name you invoke Him, the most beautiful names are His." (XVII, 110).

The Koran is, moreover, as if woven with Divine Names; everything in it is expressed in terms of a Divine aspect, in the same way as in the manifested universe, every positive Quality

of a thing may amount to a universal, and thereby Divine, Reality.

* * *

All traditional doctrines recognize the Divine Qualities, for the Divinity is conceived by a synthesis of antinomic perfections or qualities. The traditions of an archaic form contemplate them through the forces of the visible universe; the mythologists personify them. Christianity considers them above all as functions of the Holy Ghost. Islam relates the infinite richness of the universal Qualities directly to the unique Essence, and it expresses this relationship in imitation of that which exists between man and his faculties. Because of that, the greater part of the Divine Names revealed in the Koran are anthropomorphic; some, like the Names of the Unity, are abstract; rare are those which are taken from a cosmic symbolism, like the Name *an-nûr*, 'the Light'.

The anthropomorphism of the Names involves no doubt a limitation, because it translates God according to religious imagination. But all symbolism has two faces; so this anthropomorphism acquires in the Sufi perspective an eminently spiritual dimension for it indicates how the human is transposed into the universal, and by what manner the human faculties and virtues may be the organs of the contemplation of God.

It is by the function of the Universal Man that the analogy is revealed of the Divine and human. In fact, there could not in that be any conformity of man to God, if He did not reveal Himself through a prototype at once universal and human; for, how would man conform himself to the Infinite? It is thus that Universal Man is also the model *(imâm)* of the Sacred Book and the true nature of the Prophet.

The conformity of man to Divine 'characters' *(akhlâq)* – to spiritual virtues – is however only the indispensable base to the effective assimilation of the Divine Qualities *(al-ittiṣâf biṣ-ṣîfât il-îlâhiyah)*, assimilation of a purely intellectual order. By intellect we mean here pure intelligence, which is not limited by thought and which does not belong particularly to an individual; it is then, always in terms of the Universal Man that union with God is realised, whatever may be the degree of this union.

The doctrine of the Divine Man is entirely esoteric. It coincides with the contemplative way[21], that of the Sufis.

[21] Certain people have wished to see in this doctrine a Christian interference; a closer examination should have shown them that the theory in question, like the symbolism which it uses, is developed organically from the Koranic factors. Besides one may say that Christianity is characterized by its concentration on the Man-God, to such a degree that the mysteries, which elsewhere remain the secrets of the contemplative way, there assume the role of dogmas. Here is a series of compensations which render the interactions between Christianity and Islam very complex. See with regard to this: Frithjof Schuon: *'De l'Unite transcendante des Religions'*, (collection *Tradition*, ed. Gallimard, Paris).

Summary of the Work of 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî

THE first three chapters on the Essence, the Quality and the Name expose the fundamental notions which we have tried to outline.

The following six chapters describe that which one may call the Divine Degrees, that is to say: the Divine Nature, Unity, Unicity, the Compassionate Beatitude, the Lordship and the Divine Obscurity. In our translation we have left aside the chapter on the Lordship, the content of which is for the most part implied in the others. In speaking of the Divine Obscurity, which is the non-manifested Reality of God, Jîlî returns in a way to that which he was saying at the beginning on the Essence. This series of chapters constitutes, therefore, a complete cycle.

We do not translate the two chapters which follow, and which discuss the Divine Transcendence *(at-tanzîh)* and Immanence *(at-tashbîh)*, for these two chapters do not constitute indispensable links in the logical whole that we have intended to reproduce.

The four chapters that follow, on the contrary, which have to do with the 'unveiling' *(tajallî)* of the Activities, the Names, the Qualities and the Essence are dependant on those which treat of the Divine Degrees, in the sense that they describe the gradual realisation of these same Degrees. We must draw attention with respect to this that the consideration of the Divine Activities in man is connected quite naturally to the domain of human action and will, whereas the knowledge of Names and Qualities – which, moreover, imply essentially the Activities – is in the nature of pure contemplation. The contemplation of God, starting from the Names, makes use of supports for ideas, each Divine Name being like an intellectual point of view concerning the Essence.

As for the 'unveiling' of the Qualities, it comprises an effective penetration of the Divine modality, in such a way that the individual subject ceases to exist as the focus of the vision. The last of these chapters is concerned with the immediate knowledge of the Essence, knowledge which is the lot of Universal Man as the 'pole' of existence.

SUMMARY

It is up to here that our translation goes, which is, moreover, not complete, since we have omitted some passages of secondary importance and of too hermetic a character. We have marked with dots (. . .) the passages omitted in our translation: where the condensed character of the original text requires certain interpolations, we have taken care to indicate by brackets. The Arabic language is at the same time concise and complex – words have several meanings and synonyms abound; – a quality which lends itself to metaphysical speculation, but which sometimes defies a literal translation.[1]

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In that which follows, Jîlî considers first of all the seven Qualities said of the Divine Person *(an-nafs)*, which are: the Life *(al-ḥayâh)*, the Knowledge *(al-'ilm)*, the Will *(al-irâdah)*, the Power *(al-qudrah)*, the Word *(al-kalâm)*, the Hearing *(as-sam')* and the Sight *(al-baṣar)*.

All the Divine Qualities may be divided into four groups, according to whether they appertain exclusively to the Essence, like Unity, Unicity, Singularity, Absolute Independence etc. or the Divine modes of Beauty, Majesty and Infinity.

Beauty *(jamâl)* and Majesty *(jalâl)* correspond in a certain manner to the two poles of immanence and transcendence, for Majesty overwhelms the creature, whereas Beauty fulfills it.

Infinity *(al-kamâl)* synthesizes the one and the other mode. It is certainly by Infinity and not by 'Perfection', nor by 'Universality' that one must translate the word *kamâl* when it is connected with God, for the perfection of God, writes Jîlî, is that He has no limits.

The personal pronouns by which the Koranic text refers to God, equally express the essential 'aspects'; one derives from the pronoun *huwa*, 'He', *al-huwiyah*, the 'Aseity' or 'Ipseity'; this expression denotes the Absolute Mystery, for the pronoun 'He' is that of the 'absent person'. The Divine 'Subject' *(al-aniyah)*, which name is derived from the pronound *ana*, 'Me', is opposed logically to the Aseity.

The Divine Eternity is considered as having three dimensions: Eternity without beginning *(al-azal)*, Eternity without end *(al-abad)* and Pre-existence *(al-qidam)*.

[1] We have based our translation on the third edition of the Presse Azharienne of Cairo, 1329 H. (1908).

The seven 'Days of God' *(ayâm Allâh)* correspond to the Divine Actuality, for God is found "each day in another action" (Koran LV, 29).

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In a series of chapters, the first of which is the "Ringing of the Bell" and the last, the one on "Sinai and the Book written in lines", Jîlî considers the modalities of the revelation in the specific sense of this term.

The 'ringing of the bell' *(ṣalṣalat al-jaras)* means a subtle sound that the Prophet heard at the time of the revelation of the Koran and which corresponds to the repercussion of Divine Power across the multiple states of existence.

The Koran mentions three principal names of the revealed Book: "The Mother of the Book" *(umm al-kitâb)*, the name meaning the eternal prototype of the Koran, "The Recitation" *(al-qur'ân)*, the name of the Koran as an auditory revelation, and "The Discrimination" *(al-furqân)* that is to say the Koran as sacred Law. According to Jîlî, the 'Mother of the Book' corresponds to the unfathomable depth of the Divinity, maternal source of the universe; *al-qurân* corresponds analogically to the state of supreme Unity, 'descended' into the body of the Prophet, and *al-furqân* symbolizes the collectivity of the Divine Qualities, that is to say the principial distinction, equally 'descended' on Muhammed.

These are the non-temporal aspects of the Koran; on an earthly plane, it follows after three other great sacred books of the line of Abraham, the Torah, the Book of Psalms and the Gospels, by virtue of a cyclical concatenation which requires that each revelation, necessarily limited in its form – not in its essence – be compensated by another. It is thus that the Torah and the Gospels manifest a certain polarity, of which Jîlî says in short, that which expresses equally the Christian adage: *Christi doctrina revelat quod Moisi doctrina velat*. Hence, the Koran will appear as a synthesis of Judaic and Christian tendencies or as a re-establishment of the fatally broken balance.

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The second part of the work deals with cosmology, and more exactly metaphysical cosmology, for the cosmic realities always will be brought back to their Divine principles.

This part starts with a description of the degrees of principial manifestation, of which the immediate supports are the unlimited realities of the informal world. Their names, almost all drawn from the Koran, symbolize the 'abodes' or 'stations' of the Divinity, such as 'supreme Baldaquins' *(ar-rafraf al-a'lâ)*, the 'Bed of rest' *(as-sarîr)*, the 'two Feet and the two Sandals *(ar-rijlayn wa an-na'layn)*, the 'Throne' *(al-arsh)*, the 'Pedestal' *(al-kursî)* and the 'Lotus Tree of the extreme Limit' *(sidrat al-muntahâ)*. These are like so many mirrors of integral Divine irradiation. Their hierarchy is distinguished by virtue of their successive polarisation in active and passive principles: that which is passive with regard to a superior degree is in its turn active towards that which it dominates. This polarity is particularly explicit in the connection between the 'Supreme Calamus' *(al-qalam al-a'lâ)* and the 'Guarded Tablet' *(al-lûh al mahfûz)*, for the Calamus inscribes the Divine science of the universe on the Tablet, which, in its turn, is the immutable prototype of the becoming.[2]

Now, the first cosmic support of the Divine manifestations, the same as their eternal agent, is none other than the Spirit *(ar-rûh)*, which is at once created and uncreated, since it represents the mediator between God and the Universe.[3] Jîlî gives to the uncreated 'face' of the Spirit the name Holy Ghost *(ar-rûh al-quds)*; whereas he calls the Spirit as the first man 'the Angel named Spirit' *(al-malak al-musammâ bir-rûh)*.

The Spirit is refracted in the six faculties of knowledge which have their seat in man, but whose essences are cosmic and angelic, in such a way that they represent, in their non-individual realities, as many faculties as Universal Man; they are: the heart, the intellect, the conjectural faculty, the power of decision, thought and imagination.

Amongst these faculties, the heart *(al-qalb)* is central, for it is the 'place' where the Transcendent Realities enter into contact with man; it is the organ of the intuition and Divine revelation *(at-tajallî)*.

[2] See on this subject: Frithjof Schuon, *'L'Oeil du Coeur'* (collection *'Mystiques et Religions'*, Ed. Dervy-Livres, Paris), chapter *'En-Nûr'*, and *'du Soufisme'*, page 46.

[3] See *'Introduction'*; chapter *'de L'Esprit'*.

The First Intellect *(al-'aql al-awwal)* is identified essentially to the Spirit and consequently to the heart; however, its reflection in man is in one way complementary to the heart: one could say that the latter reveals the Divine Presence under its aspect of 'being', whereas the intellect – that is to say the cosmic refraction of the First Intellect – reveals it under its aspect of 'science'. According to a planetary symbolism which Jîli will expose further on, the heart is solar; it corresponds to the luminous centre of the Universe,, whereas the intellect corresponds to the most distant planetary sphere, that of Saturn, which encompasses the others.

The word *al-waḥm* denotes the conjectural faculty, the active imagination of the power of illusion, which represents the most formidable cosmic power that man has received as a loan, for it manifests the demiurgic tendency which attracts any still unexhausted possibility.

Al-himmah, on the contrary, signifies the faculty of spiritual ascension, the aspiration of man towards the essential and the power of decision, his desire for deliverance.

Thought *(al-fikr)* represents a modality of indirect knowledge. The imperfections of thought reside in its 'branches' not in its 'root' which affects the superior possibilities of man. Thought – notably meditation *(tafakkur)* – may be a 'key' to spiritual knowledge.

The sixth faculty described in Jîlî's book is the imagination *(al-khayâl)*, whose role is relatively passive in contrast to that of the conjectural faculty *(al-waḥm)*; in fact, *al-khayâl* is like the plastic material of the mental, so that this faculty corresponds analogically to the materia prima of the world of forms.

We have laid stress, to a certain degree, on these chapters concerning the faculties of the soul, for therein is a real spiritual psychology, that is to say a science of the soul in respect of its contacts with the world of the Spirit. It is, equally, in this sense that one must understand the choice of the qualities described, amongst which the faculties of sensation and action are missing, whereas will is there considered uniquely in its spiritual exaltation, like *himmah*[4].

[4] The planetary symbolism to which we have alluded, permits one to situate the faculties in a visual hierarchy: the heart corresponds to the sun; whose position is in any case central with respect to the other planets, whatever may be the astronomic system that one may adopt; the intellect corresponds to the sphere

All these faculties have their perpetual 'sources' in the 'Mohammedan Form' *(aṣ-ṣûrat al-muḥammadiyah)*, the germ of the Divine Light from which was created paradise and hell. It is here that Jîlî describes the paradisiac and the infernal states, which are not really eternal,[5] since finally all will be reintegrated in God.

All the subversive tendencies have their support in the psyche *(an-nafs)*, which is the root of individualisation and which is opposed in a certain manner to the Spirit *(ar-rûḥ)*. It has however its universal and unchangeable prototype in the 'Mohammedan Form'.

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It is of the 'Universal Man' as "synthesis of all the essential realities *(ḥaqaiq)* of existence" that Jîlî speaks in this chapter which is almost the last in the book, the rest being in short but an adjunction. As the author himself affirms, this chapter takes precisely the place of a final synthesis of all that he has described in the preceding chapters: the Essence, the Divine aspects, the revelation, the degrees of existence, the microcosm, the evolution of the soul.

Let us quote some passages from this chapter: "Each individual of the human species contains the others entirely, without any lack, his own limitation being but accidental . . . For as far as the accidental conditions do not intervene, individuals are, then, like opposing mirrors, in which each one fully reflects the other . . ." That is to say that every individual contains essentially, by his intelligence, the reality of all the others, and even of every existent thing. ". . . Only, some contain the things only by power, whereas others, namely, the perfect amongst the prophets and saints, contain them by action . . ." This means that they realise their essential identity with everything, for it is obvious that they do not contain the things concretely; there are however degrees in the 'actualization' of the essence of man, the perfect

of Saturn, the spiritual will to that of Jupiter, the conjectural faculty to that of Mars, the imagination to Venus, the thought to Mercury. Jîlî makes the vital spirit also called *rûḥ*, correspond to the moon. – One may remark on the antinomic positions, according to the geocentric order of the planets, of the *al-ḥimmah* and *al-fikr*, just as that of *al-waḥm* and *al-khayâl*.

[5] Absolute eternity belongs only to God.

plenitude belonging only to the Universal Man, he who is identified with the Prophet Muhammed. It is necessarily thus according to the perspective of Islam, since each tradition knows the Universal Man through its own spiritual pole.

". . . Universal Man" – writes Jîlî further on – "is the pole around which evolve the spheres of existence, from the first to the last; he is unique as long as existence lasts . . . However, he puts on different forms and is revealed by different cults, so that he receives multiple names[6] . . . At each epoch, he has the name which corresponds to his garb of the time. It is thus that I discovered him in the form of my master Sharaf ad-dîn Ismâil al-Jabartî; I did not know that he was the Prophet; I saw him as my master . . . It is as if one sees in a dream a person who has assumed the form of another . . . with this reservation, however, that there is a great difference between the dreaming state and that of the waking . . . But do not imagine that there is, in my words, some allusion to the metempsychosis . . ."

"Know that Universal Man comprises in himself correspondences with all the realities of existence. He corresponds to the superior realities by his own subtle nature, and he corresponds to the inferior realities with his crude nature . . . His heart corresponds to the Divine Throne; and moreover, the Prophet says that the heart of the believer is the Throne of God; his 'I' *(aniyah)* corresponds to the Divine Pedestal, his spiritual state to the Lotus Tree of the Extreme Limit, his Intellect to the Supreme Calamus, his soul to the Guarded Table, his physical body to the elements, his receptivity to the 'Hylé' . . . etc."

"The Prophet said that God had created Adam according to the form of the Clement, or again, after another oral tradition, *(hadîth)*, that God had created Adam in His Form. For God is living, knowing, powerful, endowed with will, hearing, sight and speech, in the same way that man is living, knowing, etc . . ."

"Know that the Names of the Essence and the Divine Qualities belong principially to the Universal Man, just as the (universal) kingdom, which he holds by virtue of his essence. . . he is then, to God that which the mirror is to the person who examines himself in it . . . For God imposed on Himself to contemplate His own

[6] He is Muhammed for the Moslems, Christ for the Christians, every Avatâra for the Hindus, Buddha for the Buddhists. In this last case, the idea of Universal Man absorbs all qualities positively ascribable to God, the Essence as such being expressed only by negations.

Names and Qualities only in Universal Man. There, also, is the sense of the word: "We offered the pact to the heavens, to the earth and to the mountains; they refused to burden themselves and they trembled to receive it. Man took it upon himself and he is unjust and ignorant."[7] That is to say, he wronged his own soul abasing it from so high a rank; and he is ignorant of his own capacity, since he is the place of the Divine pact, (or guarantor), and he does not know it . . ."

The rest of the book discusses cosmology; there it is a question particularly of symbolism and the planetary spheres. These correspond to a geocentric system, which takes away nothing from the validity of the analogies, since this system reproduces the order of things such as they appear spontaneously to human vision; there is, then, all the spiritual significance which the visible 'signs' of God have.[8]

Let us note also that Sufi cosmology is connected to angelology, in the same way that the physical world is connected to the subtle world and beyond to the world of Spirit. As for angelology, it is integrated in turn into the science of the Divine Qualities, like every spiritual function is integrated in an aspect of God.

[7] Koran, XXIII,72.

[8] See our study: *'Une clef spirituelle de l'Astrologie musulmane d'après Mohyi-d-din ibn 'Arabi'* (Les Editions Traditonnelles, Paris, 1950).

Translation

Of the Essence *(adh-dhât)*

KNOW that by 'essence' *(adh-dhât)* one means, in a general manner, that to which the Names *(al-asmâ)* and the Qualities *(as-sîfât)* are attached by their principle *(fî 'aynihâ)*, and not by their (contingent) existence *(fî wujûdihâ)*. Every Name and every Quality attaches itself to a subjacent reality which, itself, is its essence.

As for existence *(al-wujûd)*[1], it has two degrees; it is the pure Being, in so far as Essence of Creator *(al-bâri)*, or the existence attained by nothingness, in so far as the relative essence of creatures.

By 'Essence of God' *(dhât Allâh)* – exalted may He be! one means God Himself, that is to say That by which He is; God subsists in fact by Himself, and it is to this Divine Aseity *(al-huwiyah)* that the Names of (Perfection) and the (Universal) Qualities essentially belong. One conceives, then, the Essence through every form (of idea) which flows logically from one of the meanings which It implies; I mean that every Quality which results from one of His attributes really belongs to Him; it is to the Essence – to its Being – that every Name implying an idea of perfection *(kamâl)* is connected; now, the sum of the perfections includes infinity and therefore the impossibility to embrace It by intelligence, from which there results, on the one hand, that It is unknowable, and on the other that even that may be known, since it is impossible to be ignorant of it.

Have I learnt all, globally and distinctly,
Of Thine Essence, O Thou, in Whom all Qualities are united?
Or is Thy Face too sublime for Thy Nature to be grasped?
I understand then that His Essence cannot be understood.
Far be it from Thee that anyone may fathom Thee, and far be it from Thee
That anyone ignore Thee, – Oh perplexity!

Know that the Essence of God the Supreme is the mystery

[1] *Al-wujûd* means at once the existence and the Being; *al-wujûd al-mahd* is the 'pure Being'. The root *WJD* contains the sense 'to find', which in the passive form gives 'to be found', 'to exist': it indicates, then, the principial identity of the Being and of the Knowledge.

(ghayb) of the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)* which every symbol expresses in a certain respect, without it being able to express It under many other respects. One conceives It then not by some rational idea, any more than one understands It by some conventional allusion *(ishârah)*; for one understands a thing only by virtue of a relation, which assigns to it a position, or by a negation, hence by its contrary; but, there is not, in all existence, a single relation which 'situates' the Essence, nor a single assignation which applies to It, consequently nothing that can deny It and nothing which is contrary to It. It is, for language, as if It did not exist, and in this respect It refuses human understanding. He who speaks becomes dumb before the Divine Essence, and he who is agitated becomes immobile;[2] he who sees is dazzled. It is too noble to be conceived by the intelligences . . . It is too elevated for thoughts to grasp It. Its primordial foundation *(kunh)* is attained by no sentence of the science, nor by any silence that stills it; no limit, however fine and incommensurable it may be, embraces It...

The Holy Bird[3] flew in the unlimited expanse of this empty atmosphere,[4] exalting God by His totality[5] in the air of the Supreme sphere;[6] then he was ravished to the outside of existences[7] and transpierced the Names and the Qualities[8] by realisation *(taḥqîq)* and direct vision *('iyân)*;[9] then he glided around the zenith of non-existence *(al-'adam)*[10] after having traversed the expanses of becoming and of that which is before time *(al-ḥudûth wa-l-qidam)*; then he found Him necessarily, He Whose existence[11] is not subject to doubt and Whose absence is by no means hidden. And when he wanted to return to the

[2] That is to say that those mental operations cease, for they have no hold on the Reality of the Essence.

[3] The Holy Bird is the Spirit who, while living in man, transcends the form. "The Spirit penetrates all, even the depths of God." (St Paul, 1 Cor: 11,10) – "Wisdom is more skilful than all movement; it penetrates and introduces itself everywhere, because of its purity." *(Livre de la Sagesse, VII, 22-30).*

[4] Empty of formal manifestations.

[5] And not simply by an isolated faculty.

[6] The sphere of Unity.

[7] Beyond all manifestations.

[8] The distinctions inherent to the principial Reality, the Being.

[9] Those are the two 'ontological' and 'intellective' poles of total knowledge.

[10] Metacosmic non-existence *(al-'adam)* must not be confused with the void, for it is beyond all these conditions, of which the most general is existence. *Al-'adam* may also mean the Non-Being, that which is, therefore, absolutely indeterminable, the Being being precisely the first of all possible determinations.

[11] Or, rather, the 'reality'.

created world, he asked that a sign of recognition should be given him; and it was written on the wing of the dove: "Verily, oh Thou, talisman,[12] who art neither quiddity nor name, nor shadow, nor contour, nor a spirit, nor body, nor quality, nor designation, nor sign, – to Thee belongs existence and non-existence *(al-wujûd wa-l-'adam)*, and to Thee the becoming and that which is before time; – Thou art non-existent as Essence, existent in Thy Person *(an-nafs)*[13], known by Thy grace, absent according to the species;[14] Thou art as if Thou created only metaphors and as if Thou wert only as a manner of speech; Thou art the evidence of Thyself by the spontaneity of Thy language; I have just found Thee Living, Knowing, Willing, Mighty, Speaking, Listening and Seeing;[15] I have embraced Beauty *(al-jamâl)* and I have been transpierced by the Majesty *(al-jalâl)*; I have fathomed through Thy-self the modes of the Infinite *(al-kamâl)*; as for that of which Thou hast drawn in affirming the existence of another than Thyself, it is not there, but Thy resplendent Beauty is perfect; and to whom are these words addressed, is it to Thee, is it to Me? O Thou who art absent there, we have found Thee here!"[16]

Then there was written on the wing of the green bird, with the pen of ink of red sulphur *(al-kibrît al-aḥmar)*:[17] In Truth, the

[12] This discourse is addressed to God, with Whom the Spirit is identified, which explains precisely the writing on the wing.

[13] That is to say that the Essence is beyond existence and even beyond the Being in so far as determination; It is at once the Being and the Non-Being, whereas the Divine Person, who is described by the perfect Qualities, 'exists', for it faces creation. This has to do with the same distinction as between *Branma Nirguna* (Brahman non Qualified) and *Brahma Saguna* (Brahman Qualified) according to the Hindu doctrine. One must understand well that the Essence 'possesses' the universal Qualities, but that It cannot be 'described' by them.

[14] Since the species always englobes a multitude of analogous things, the Unique Essence necessarily escapes all generic definition. "There is no Divinity, unless it is the Divinity" *(Lâ ilâha illa-Allâh)*.

[15] These are the seven qualities said of the Divine Person, which play an important role in the most explicit formulations of the Islamic creed: according to 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî, they are symbolized by the seven letters which constitute the Divine Name 'The Compassionate' *(ar-raḥmân)*, the *'alif'* corresponding to Life, the *'lam'* to Science (or Knowledge), the *'râ'* to Power, the *'hâ'* to the Will, the *'mîm'* to the Hearing, the *'alif'* between the *'mîm'* and the *'nûn'* – the *'alif'* which is not always written – to the Sight and the *'nûn'* to the Speech.

[16] Here is inserted a long poem which we omit because of the elliptic language which would require too many commentaries.

[17] Green is the colour of knowledge, also that of the Prophet; the blessed of Paradise are dressed in green silk – the Prophet says of certain of his companions

Grandeur, *(al-'azamah)* is fire, the Science *(al-'ilm)* is water and the Strength *(al-quwwah)* is air and the Wisdom *(al-ḥikmah)* is earth,[18] elements through which is realised our Unique Essence *(al-jawhar al fard)*.[19] There are two dimensions for this essence, of which the first is the non-beginning *(al-azal)* and the second the without-end *(al-abad)*, and two designations, of which the first is God *(al-ḥaqq)* and the second the creature *(al-khalq)*, and two attributions, of which the first is eternity *(al-qidam)* and the second the becoming *(al-ḥudûth)*, and two names, of which the first is the Lord *(ar-rabb)* and the second the servant *(al-'abd)*. It has two faces: the first is apparent *(zâhir)*, this is the world *(ad-dunya)* and the second is interior *(bâtin)*, this is the beyond *(al-ukhra)*; and it has two principles *(ḥukm)*: the first is the necessity *(al-wujûb)* and the second the possibility *(al-imkan)*;[20] and it has two relationships: according to the first, it is absent for itself and existent for that which is other than itself, and according to the second, it is absent for that which is other than itself and existent for itself.[21] There are two understandings of it *(m'arifah)*, the first concerns primarily its necessary affirmation, then its negation; the second concerns firstly its negation, then its necessary affirmation.[22] Its conception implies a point of error;

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who died in the Holy War, that their souls are to be found in the gullet of the green birds of Paradise. The red sulphur is an alchemical symbol of the Spirit in permanent act.

[18] The elements represent here qualities easily discernible in the realities to which they refer.

[19] *al-jawhar al-fard*, literally: 'The singular jewel', means the essence of the being; it is also the Intellect in so far as this is connected to the individual being and his eternal principle. *'Al-jawhar'* (from the Persian *'gawhar'*) means a pearl or precious stone and in philosophical language the essence or the substance; the incorruptible character of the precious stone symbolizes the immutability of the essence. One may remember here the Buddhist expression "jewel in the lotus" *(mani padmê)*.

[20] That is to say that in our Divine Essence all the contrast and complementaries are united. The necessity and the possibility – or the reality and the possibility – represent in a certain sense the two extreme ontological poles. In the Divine Essence, the possibility *(al-mumkin)* is necessary *(wajîb)* because of having its 'raison d'être' in the Essence Itself, whereas the 'necessary' – or the 'real' – is contained therein as pure possibility.

[21] These two relationships correspond to the respective poles 'object' and 'subject', according to the principial meaning – and not only psychological – that one can attribute to these terms.

[22] The model of these two understandings is the fundamental formula of Islam: *'Lâ ilâha illa-Allâh'* ("There is no Divinity if it is not the Divinity"), of which formula the negative part i.e. "there is no Divinity", and the positive part "if it is not the Divinity" are logically reciprocal.

for there are, in the symbols, deviations and in the allusions misappropriations of their sense: prudence to Thee, oh bird, in safekeeping this writing that another may not read it!"

And the bird did not cease to soar in the spheres, living in death, imperishable in annihilation; at last, spreading his wings he looked around, turned this way and that, but he saw nothing come out of its own self, nor go towards a nature which was foreign to its own; that the bird plunged into the ocean, that he came out again, that he drank of it, that he became drunk or that he desired still more, none but he spoke and nothing of him was missing. 'Absolute perfection' has become the expression which is applied really to him, for he does not grasp the limits of one of his Qualities; the Names of the Essence and the Divine Qualities belong to him by virtue of a real assimilation; there are no reins which govern it by the law of adequacy and of contradiction, he enjoys fully the possibilities inherent to his Qualities, and yet there is nothing which belongs to him entirely in its individual form; he possesses all the liberty to evolve in his place and his world and he is at the same time limited by his stations.[23] He sees the perfection of his full moon really in his soul and he is mentally incapable because of the eclipse of his sun;[24] he is ignorant of the thing while knowing it and he changes place while remaining in one place; the world the most intimately contained in his knowledge is that which he can prove the least:[25] the most remote people on his road are the closest to him; his letter *(ḥarf)* is not read and its meaning is not understood, is not seen . . .

[23] The spirit of man who has realised Unity knows everything fundamentally and globally, but the individual aspect of things remains such as it was, that is to say fragmentary and of an inexhaustible variety. See on this subject *'Du Soufism,'* chapter *"De l'Union"*.

[24] Seen from the side of discursive reason, the supraformal Spirit is obscure. Let us remember that St. Denis the Areopagite talks in an analogous connection of "transluminous obscurity". Inversely, the individual world is of shadows in comparison to the Light of the Spirit.

[25] In the Union, the spirit knows things by the permanent essences *(al-a'yân ath-thâbitah)* but ignores the ephemeral aspects, for in this state, the spirit participates in a certain manner in the Divine richness, which is sufficient unto Itself.

OF THE NAME *(Al-ism)*

. . . THE perfection of the Named is eminently manifested by the fact that He is revealed by His Name to he who ignores Him, so that the Name is to the Named that which the exterior *(az-zâhir)* is to the interior *(al-bâtin)*, and in this respect the Name is the Named Himself.[26]

The subject of a name may be non-existent as such and exist only ideally, as is the case of the Phoenix, who takes all its existence from its name, and in which qualities are deduced only from this name; for, according to the conventional allegory, the Phoenix means that which escapes intelligences and thoughts; so one represents it by a figure without equal in its magnitude. Its name, then, results not from its essence, but is on the contrary as if superimposed on an ideal conception to keep it in its rank of existence. Thou wilt understand that it is not the same in the ontological order, but that the name of the veritable Being is a way to the real knowledge of the Named . . . The name of the Phoenix is then in the created order, the inverse of the Name of God in the truth, for, if the named Phoenix does not exist in itself, that which is named *Allâh* is in Himself the pure Being. As one cannot reach the Phoenix except by the intermediary of his name – and in this respect the Phoenix exists – in the same way there is access to the knowledge of God, only through the intermediary of His Names and His Qualities, and each Name and each (Divine) Quality being contained in the Name *Allâh*, it follows that there is no access to the knowledge of God except by way of this Name.

In truth it is this Name which communicates really the Being and which leads towards Him; it is then like the seal of the universal sense (of a metaphysical aspect, therefore supra-individual) of man; it is by it that he who is elected to the Grace is united to the Clement, *(ar-raḥmân)*. He who looks at the tracings of the seal is with God by the intervention of His Name; he who interprets them, is with Him by the intervention of His Qualities; and he who breaks the seal, transpiercing thus the Quality and the Name, is with God through the Essence, without

[26] Conforming to all the traditional teachings, the Name of God is essentially and mysteriously identified to God Himself. "The Lord and His Name are one" says Ramakrishna also.

the Divine Qualities being veiled from him . . .

God has made of this Name the mirror of man; when he examines therein his face, there he recognizes the sense of the Sacred Word *(ḥadîth qudsî)*: "God was and there was nothing else with Him." *(kâna-Llâhu wa lâ shaya ma'ah)*, and it is then that it will be revealed to him that his hearing is the Hearing of God, his sight the Sight of God, his word the Word of God, his life the Life of God, his knowledge the Knowledge of God, his will the Will of God and his power the Power of God, – all that by the way of Union – and he knows henceforth that all these Qualities are related to him only by loan and by transposition, whereas they belong to God according to their reality.[27] God says: "God created you and that which you do," (Koran XXXVII, 94; 96) and He says elsewhere: "You worship outside God only idols and you create lies" (Koran, XXIX, 16; 17); here the creative faculty is lent to man, for it is God who creates really (that which is in question). He who examines his face in the mirror of this Name *(Allâh)* enjoys this knowledge directly. And it may happen that he attains, from the sciences of the Union *(at-tawhîd)*, the knowledge of the Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)*; if he reaches this degree of contemplation he will answer those who address a request to God, for he has become the place of manifestation *(mazhar)* of the Divine Name. Then, if he ascends from the darkness of the (relative) void towards the knowledge of the Necessary Being and God purifies him of contingencies by the revelation of eternity, he becomes the mirror of the Divine Name, so that he himself and the Name are like two mirrors confronting each other and being reflected the one in the other; and if someone reaches this degree of contemplation, it is God who will answer those who address to him a request; the Divine Anger will be on those who evoke his anger, and God will be content with those who attract his contentment. And it may happen that he attains, from the sciences of the Union, the knowledge of the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)* which, itself, involves all other knowledge. There is nevertheless, between this

[27] In this passage and in that which follows, Jîlî is referring to this Divine message *(ḥadîth qudsî)* revealed by the mouth of the Prophet: "If someone causes offence to one of My saints, I declare war on him. My servant cannot approach Me with something that pleases Me more than that which I impose on him. And My servant approaches Me ceaselessly by free acts until I love him; and when I love him, I am the hearing by which he hears, the sight by which he sees, the hand with which he takes hold, and the foot with which he walks: if he prays to Me, I give to him certainly, and if he looks for My help, I help him certainly."

state and the unveiling of the Essence Itself, a subtle difference which consists in this, that the contemplative attaining this state reads only the *Furqân*, whereas he who knows the Essence will read all the revealed Books[28] . . .

only he who see the sun with his eye knows the seed.

must order your mind (instinct) to understand

[28] As we were saying in the summary of Jîlî's work, the Name *al-furqân*, 'the Discrimination' means the Koran under its aspect of Law, therefore particular revelation. Thus, as one will see in what follows, Jîlî means by the different names of the Sacred Book, the degrees of knowledge or being.

OF THE QUALITY *(aṣ-ṣîfah)*

THE Quality *(aṣ-ṣîfah)* is that which communicates to thee the manner of being of the subject on which it depends *(al-mawṣûf)*, that is to say that it makes thee understand its 'how', condensing it in thy imagination, making it clear for thy thought and approaching it to thy intellect; thus dost thou taste the state of the subject by means of its Quality. Now, if thou hast tasted it and thou hast considered it in thy soul, it may happen that thy nature be attracted towards it, following its affinity, or it turns away from it because its taste displeases it. Understand this well, reflect on it and appreciate it, so that it is imprinted in thy understanding by the Divine seal of thy integrality[29]; and let not thyself be intimidated by this shell, for it is but an envelope of the kernel and a veil over the face.

The quality depends on its subject, that is to say that thou dost not appropriate to thyself either the qualities of another or thine own qualities[30] and that thou dost not possess them in any manner, before thou knowest that thou art the subject itself on which they depend, and that thou dost realise that thou art He Who knows; it is then only that the knowledge really will be thine, and thenceforth thy certitude will have no further need of confirmations, for the Quality is inseparable from its subject.[31]

One distinguishes usually in man two categories of qualities: those which are inherent to him, like life, and those which emanate from him, like generosity for example. Those who know the Truth *(al-muḥaqqiqûn)* subdivide the Names of God into two groups. The Names which are sufficient qualitatively to themselves – called in grammar attributive names – constitute the first group: they are the names of the Essence like the One *(al-aḥad)*, the Unique *(al-wâḥid)*, the Single *(al-fard)*, the Independent *(aṣ-ṣamad)*, the Immense *(al-'aẓîm)*, as well as the Living *(al-ḥayy)*, the Glorious *(al-'aẓîz)*. The second group is constituted of the Qualitative Names, like those which are connected to the Science

[29] It is a question of the totality of the being, which by definition is found illuminated by the Divine Intellect.

[30] Qualities or faculties.

[31] This corresponds to the Vedantic doctrine taught on the Self which is the subjacent reality to every Quality 'objectively' known.

(al-'ılm), to the Power *(al-qudrah)* or to the Qualities said of the Person *(aṣ-ṣifât an-nafsiyah)*, or again to the Divine Activities *(aṣ-ṣifât al-af'âliyah)*.

The root of the qualitative aspect in the Divine Qualities is the Divine Name *ar-raḥmân* ('The Compassionate')[32] which, by its universality, is placed, so to speak, opposite the Name of *Allâh*; the distinction between the two Names consists in the fact that the Name *ar-raḥmân* synthesizes all the 'qualitative' aspects of the Divinity, whereas the Name *Allâh* synthesizes all the Names.[33]

Know that *ar-raḥmân* implies the knowledge of the Being envisaged in His pure universality, without regard towards the creature, whereas the Name *Allâh* implies the knowledge of the supreme Essence in respect of His totalisation which embraces as much the Divine Perfection *(al-kamâl al haqqî)* as all the imperfect nature of the created *(an naqs al-khalqî)*. By *ar-raḥmân* one means, then, the Quality which embraces all the Divine Qualities.[34]

For he who has realised the Truth *(al-muḥaqqiq)*, it is the Quality (and not the Essence) which he can neither attain nor integrate as such, contrarily to that which takes place for the Divine Essence, whereas he does not know at all the Universal Plenitude *(al-kamâl)* of the Qualities; the Essence of God is then dear to him, but the Qualities are not, in an immediate manner.[35]

[32] The Name *raḥmân* is derived from *raḥmah*, Mercy, like the Name *raḥîm*. Generally one translates *ar-raḥmân* by 'The Compassionate' to distinguish it from *ar-raḥîm* which one translates by 'The Merciful'; in reality the first of these two Divine Names describes the Divine Nature as pure Mercy or Goodness: 'He Who is in Himself Merciful'; whereas the second Name suggests a Divine Activity: 'He Who is Merciful towards the created'. According to a temporal symbolism often used, *ar-raḥmân* is the Merciful 'before' the creation, and *ar-raḥîm* is the Merciful 'since' the creation, which precisely comes to saying that the first of these Names means Divine 'Goodness' (or Beatitude) in Itself, and the second Name the 'Goodness' (or 'Mercy') with regard to the creature.

[33] For, no matter how one opposes the Names to the Qualities, one understands from the first the assignations of the Essence and by the latter the Divine Aspects.

[34] *Ar-raḥmân* corresponds, then, to *ananda* which is the principial balance of all possibilities of *atma*. – The Sanskrit word *ananda* means 'beatitude'.

[35] Jîlî reverses here the theological axiom according to which God can be known only by His Qualities, whereas His Essence remains unknowable; as we have explained in our introduction, he means by that that it is the distinctive knowledge which remains uncertain, whereas the certitude resides only in the immediate undifferentiated knowledge, which is precisely that of the Essence. That which he says does not exclude the fact that the Essence is 'unknowable' in the sense that It cannot be embraced by the intellect, nor that the Quality may be known intuitively.

For if the servant *(al-'abd)* is elevated by cosmic degrees towards the degree of the Eternal Reality and he discovers himself, he recognizes that the Divine Essence is his own essence, so that he really attains the Essence and knows It, as the Prophet expresses it thus: "He who knows himself *(nafsah)*, knows his Lord," *(man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu)*. But it still remains for him to know that which depends on this Essence – as he himself depends on It by his reality – as regards selfsame Qualities: but there are no means ever to exhaust the Qualities. Thus for example, for that which is of the Quality of the (Divine) Science, if the servant of God knows It, he apprehends in distinctive mode only that part descended into his heart; and when by this Quality of the Science he apprehends, for example, the total number[36] of men in existence, there still remains for him to know their names in detail, then their attributes, then their characters, their states and so on indefinitely. It is the same for every other Quality; the indefinite cannot be exhausted distinctively, but only by integration, for integration proceeds from the Essence, being the perception of the Essence by Itself, immediate perception from which nothing of Itself escapes. It is then only Essence which is knowable and only Qualities which are unknowable; the indefinity belongs only to the Qualities of the Essence and not to the Essence as such, so that the Essence is understandable and realisable, and that the Qualities are unknown and indefinite.

This is a veil for many of the initiates, for when God reveals to them His Essence, showing them that He is themselves, they tend to perceive His Qualities and do not find them in themselves; it happens, then, that they deny Him and do not reply to Him when He calls them, and do not adore Him when He said to their Moses: "In Truth I am God, there is no Divinity if it is not Me, adore Me"[37]: they say to Him: "thou art only creature", for their belief in God does not mean the idea that His Essence is knowable, whereas His Qualities are unknown; and since the unveiling *(at-tajallî)* contradicts their belief, they fall into negation, having supposed that the Qualities are objectively *(shuhûdan)* knowable in the Essence, in the same way that the Essence may be known, and not knowing that that is forbidden

[36] Or rather the collective nature.

[37] It is the word which God addresses to Moses according to the Koran: *Innanî anâ-Allâhu, lâ ilaha illa anâ fa-'budnî.* (XX, 14.).

even with regard to the creature; for dost thou not see thine own person as an evident thing, whereas the Qualities which are in thee such as courage, generosity, science, are not immediately perceptible, but are manifested gradually and according to determined modes? It is in view of its effects that one attributes to thee such and such a quality; apart from that all thy qualities are in thee in the virtual state, none of them being perceptible directly; but the intelligence connects them to thee following the practice and according to the rule generally admitted.

And know that the perception[38] of the Supreme Essence consists in that which thou knowest, in the path of Divine intuition, that thou art Him, and He is thee, without there being fusion of the two, the servant being servant and the Lord being Lord, not that the servant becomes Lord, nor that the Lord becomes servant. Now, if thou knowest this truth by the path of (intellectual) taste *(adh-dhawq)* and of Divine intuition *(al-kashf)* which exceeds direct science and vision *(al-'iyân)* – and it will be only after the essential 'crushing and self-effacement', the sign of this intuition consisting in the fact that there is first the extinction *(fanâ)* of 'me' by the unveiling of the Lord, then extinction of the Presence of the Lord by the unveiling of the secret of the Lordship *(ar-rubûbiyah)* and finally extinction of that which depends on the Qualities by the realisation of the Essence, – if then this happens to thee, thou hast attained the Essence. In itself, thy knowledge of the Essence could not be augmented by whatever there may be; as for the qualities which belong to thy Ipseity, like Science, Power, Hearing, Seeing, Grandeur, and others, know that each of those who have realised the Essence assimilates them according to the degree of intensity of his spiritual will *(himmah)* and according to the penetration of his science.

Say then what thou wilt: if thou sayest that the Essence cannot be attained, that is true in the sense that It is the actual source of the Qualities, – and it is to this truth that the Divine Word alludes: "The vision cannot attain Him"[39], for the vision from a part of the Qualities, and the Quality as such, not being under-

[38] *Idrâk*: the author purposely employs here a term which contradicts the axiom that God cannot be 'perceived'; he indicates by that that his manner of expressing himself is not scholastic.

[39] "The vision cannot attain Him, it is He Who attains the vision." Koran VI, 103; 104.

standable, for all the more reason the Essence cannot be grasped (by the intermediary of the Qualities); if thou dost affirm on the contrary that It is knowable, that corresponds to what we were saying above. Moreover, these questions are hidden from many of the initiated and nobody has discussed them before I have; reflect on it then, for there is one of the rare gifts of the instant *(al-waqt)*. As for he who is illumined by this intuition, he tastes the joy that God tastes by the possession of His own Qualities, and if he progresses further in this intuition, he succeeds in knowing how the Qualities depend on their subject, that is to say on God. That is the exhaustion and the complete penetration; so understand! But this is understood only by those who have been fashioned for the perfection and who have approached the Being Who is the Essence of the Majesty and of the Generosity *(dhu-l-jalâli wa-l-ikrâm)*; but, before arriving at this station, what thorny trees and blades of swords!

We also may talk of these ideas in a quite different manner, which in appearance contradicts that which we have just been saying, but in appearance only; besides, all contradictory truths are united in Truth.[40] We will say then, in a general manner, that the Qualities are the defined ideas, whereas the Essence is an indefinable thing; but, defined ideas are closer to the perception than an indefinable thing. And if it is exact that one must deny the cognoscibility of the Qualities, there is no way of knowing the Essence by whatever manner there may be; so in reality, neither His Qualities, nor His Essence are knowable . . .[41]

[40] It is a question naturally of the partial aspects corresponding to the different perspectives and which are found conciliated in the 'non-aspect' of the Total Unity.

[41] That is to say by a distinctive knowledge.

OF THE QUALITY OF DIVINITY *(al-ulûhiyah)*

KNOW that the Divine Nature which encompasses all the Realities of the Being and maintains them in their respective degrees is called 'Quality of Divinity' *(al-ulûhiyah)*.[42] And I mean by 'Realities' of the Being *(ḥaqâiq al-wujûd)*, at once the principles *(aḥkam)* conditioning the different states of manifestation *(mazâhir)*, and that which is manifested therein, that is to say God *(al-ḥaqq)*[43] and the creature *(al-khalq)* at the same time. The 'Quality of Divinity' signifies, then, that which totalizes the Divine Dignities, (Divine Aspects), at the same time as all the degrees of existence, and which assigns to every thing that which returns to it from the Being. The Name *Allâh* designates the Master of this supreme dignity which can only belong to the Absolute Essence. The supreme affirmation of the Essence is, then, that of the 'Quality of Divinity' which 'Itself', encompasses and synthesizes all the affirmations and governs every Quality and every Name.

The 'Quality of Divinity' corresponds to the 'Mother of the Book' *(umm al-kitâb)*[44], as the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*[45] corresponds to

[42] The word *ulûhiyah* is derived from the word *ilâh*, which means 'divinity' or 'god', (in a general sense which we indicate by the small initial). One could express *ulûhiyah* by 'Divinity', but with this reservation, that the word must designate, then, the 'Quality of Divinity' and not the 'Divine Being', a distinction which the German language expresses by the terms 'Göttlichkeit' and 'Gottheit'; in French, one could find an analogous distinction in the terms 'royauté' and 'roi', the first designating the 'Quality of King' and the second the 'Royal Being'. If we translate *al-ulûhiyah* by the 'Quality of Divinity', there is then, no question of a 'Divine Quality', the word 'Quality' here having but a completely verbal function, like the word 'character' which is used in the same sense.

[43] The root *HQQ* implies the meanings of justice, of truth and of reality. The expression *al-ḥaqq* may be rendered most often by 'God'. The derived word *ḥaqîqah* signifies the true aspect, principial, or in a special acceptation 'interior sense' of a symbol. We have translated here *ḥaqîqah* by Reality, to express that which is opposed. Cf. the expression of the Prophet: *likulli dhi ḥaqqin ḥaqîqah:* "To every real (or true) thing there corresponds a principial Reality (or Truth)."

[44] Symbolized by the ink well which contains in a state of indifferentiation the letters *(al-ḥuruf)* of existence, or the letters of the Sacred Book. 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî establishes an analogy between the 'Mother of the Book' and the Christian symbolism of the Virgin, mother of Christ, He who is "Word of *Allâh*".

[45] Derived from *aḥad*, One.

the 'Koran' *(al-qur'ân)*[46], the Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)*[47] to the 'Discrimination' *(al-furqân)*[48], and the Compassion *(ar-raḥmâniyah)*[49] to the 'Glorious Book' *(al-kitâb al-majîd)*.[50] Or again, according to the ancient symbolism in use amongst the initiated, the 'Mother of the Book' is the 'Principial Substance' *(mâhiyatu kunhi-dh-dhât)*[51], the 'Koran', the Essence, the 'Discrimination', the Qualities, the 'Book', the Existence.[52] If God so Wills, we will explain these symbols in turn in this book; moreover, if thou knowest the usual symbolism, and thou dost conceive the reality *(al-ḥaqîqah)* to which we allude, thou wilt know that the sense of the two sorts of analogy is essentially the same.

If then thou dost grasp that which we have just said, thou wilt know that the Unity *(aḥadiyah)* is the supreme of the Names which we found under the domination of the 'Quality of Divinity' *(al-ulûḥiyah)* and that the Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)* is the first of the Divine descents *(tanazzulât)* of the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*.

The supreme of the dignities contained in the Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)* is the 'Compassion' *(ar-raḥmâniyah)*, the supreme affirmation of the 'Compassion' is the 'Lordship' *(ar-rubûbiyah)*, and the supreme affirmation of the 'Lordship' is in the Divine Name *al-malik* (the King), in such a way that the hierarchical order of these Divine Aspects is ascendant: *al-malikiyah* (the Royalty), *ar-rubûbiyah* (the Lordship), *ar-raḥmâniyah* (the Clemency), *al-wâḥidiyah* (the Unicity), *al-aḥadiyah* (the Unity), and in last place *al-ulûhiyah* ('The Quality of Divinity'), for this gives to the realities of existence and of non-existence that which comes back to them in reality and encompasses all, whereas *al-*

[46] Derived from the root QR': read, recite.

[47] Derived from *wâḥid*, Unique, Alone.

[48] *Al-furqân*, that is to say the Sacred Book under Its aspect of 'discrimination', corresponds to the fundamental distinction; but this is connected to the Divine Aspect of Unicity.

[49] Derived from *ar-raḥmân*.

[50] Another designation of the Koran, or the revelation as such, under its aspect of Divine Beatific manifestation.

[51] *Mâhiyah* is derived from the relative pronoun *mâ* 'that', and means, according to the most exterior acceptation: 'that of which it is made.' *Kunh* is translated either by 'primordial foundation', 'intimate nature', or by 'extreme limit'. The expression *mâhiyatu kunhi-dh-dhât* concerns the passive aspect of the Essence; it is the most elevated transposition of the notion of substance, approaching the Taoist expression "passive perfection". The result of all these analogies is that the expression *ulûhiyah* is equivalent to that of 'All-Possibility'.

[52] "We have omitted nothing in the (eternal) Book." Koran, VI. 38.

aḥadiyah (Unity) is a reality contained in the sum of the realities of the Being.

The 'Quality of Divinity' is then superior to the Unity; consequently, the Name *Allâh* is the supreme Name, superior to the Name *al-aḥad* (the One).

The Unity is the most exclusive affirmation of the Essence for Itself, whereas the 'Quality of Divinity' is the sublime affirmation of the Essence for Itself and for other than Itself.

It is for that, that the initiated do not have access to the state of Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*, whereas access to the state of knowledge of the 'Quality of Divinity' *(al-ulûhiyah)* is not forbidden to them; for the Unity is the pure Essence, in which there appears no Quality at all and, so much the more, no creature; there is then no correlation possible between It and the created, whatever may be the perspective[53]: It belongs only to the 'Ancient' *(al-qadîm)*, to the 'Subsisting by Itself' *(al-qâïmu bi-dhâtihi)*, to which nothing of Himself is hidden in the sense that, if thou art Him, thou art not thee, but He is Himself, and if He is thee, He is not Himself, but it is thee who is thy-self.

However, for he who receives this revelation, know that that is one of the revelations of the Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)*, for at the state of Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)* no single mention of 'thee' or of 'He' could be referred to. Understand then! However, we will talk of the Unity in its turn, if God so Wills.

And know that existence *(al-wujûd)* and non-existence *(al-'adam)*[54] are found, as it were in reciprocal confrontation, and that the sphere of the 'Quality of Divinity' encompasses both: for the 'Quality of Divinity' unites the contrasts, such as the eternal *(al-qadîm)* and the ephemeral *(al-ḥadîth)*, God *(al-ḥaqq)* and the creature *(al-khalq)*, or existence and non-existence, so that (logically) the necessary appears in It as (logically) impossible after having been affirmed as necessary, and inversely the contradictory, after having been affirmed in It as such, appears as necessary; in the same way, God *(al-ḥaqq)* appears in the 'Quality of Divinity' under the form of the creature, as the Prophet expressed, saying "I saw my Lord under the form of a raw adolescent", whereas the creature appears as the image of God,

[53] That is to say that the Essence alone can know the Essence; the creature is annihilated in the state of Supreme Unity.

[54] This word, which starts with the gutteral *'ayn*, differs phonetically and etymologically from the name Adam.

following the Divine Word: "He created Adam in His image".[55] It is thus that the contrasts appear in the 'Quality of Divinity', for It gives to everything, of all that It encompasses, the reality that It has. God *(al-ḥaqq)* appears, in the 'Quality of Divinity', in His most perfect and highest dignity, in His (purely) universal affirmations and in His most noble Names. On the other hand, the contingent appears in the 'Quality of Divinity' in all its species and according to all its changes and its effacements or affirmations possible. As for Being *(al-wujûd)*, it is revealed in the 'Quality of Divinity' in all the perfection of its hierarchy, as well as in its unitive aspects, which unite the creature to God, as well as in its separative aspects. The non-existence is revealed in the 'Quality of Divinity' in its 'interiority' *(butûn)*, its limpidity, and also according to its most perfect 'aspect', like non-being in its pure extinction *(fanâ)*.[56]

This cannot be known by reason nor conceived by thought; only he who has attained Divine intuition savours the pure taste of this total revelation which one calls the 'Divine Unveiling' *(at-tajallî al-ilâhî)*; and it is the object of the perplexity *(ḥayrah)* of the perfect amongst the initiated. It is to the secret of the 'Quality of Divinity' that the Prophet alludes in saying: "I am he, amongst you, who knows *Allâh* the best[57] and who fears Him most"; it was not that he feared either the Lord *(ar-rabb)* or the Clement *(ar-raḥmân)*, but he feared *Allâh*, and it is that that he expressed by these words: "I do not perceive what He will make of me nor what He will make of you"; he said that while he still knew better than any other, and through God Himself, that which exists and that which emanates from the Divine side; but by that he meant to say: "I do not know under which aspect He is revealed, in this Divine Unveiling". The fact is that He is revealed according to the principle of this state, a principle which is not subjected to a single law nor to a single contrast, so that He is knowable and He is not, or that He is unknowable and He is not; for there is no limit at which this Divine state stops distinctly; so the distinctive knowledge is not related, whatever may be the point of view; since it is impossible that God has a

[55] Literally: " . . . in His form". It is a word of Divine inspiration *(ḥadîth qudsî)* pronounced by the Prophet.

[56] The sense of *al-fanâ* corresponds to that of the Sanscrit word *nirvâna*, just as *fanâ' ul-fanâ*, the 'extinction of extinction', corresponds to *pari-nirvâna*.

[57] Literally: "He who knows best through *Allâh*."

limit, and there is no means of knowing that which has no limit. But God *(al-ḥaqq)* is revealed in this state by way of 'totalization' and of integration.

The perfect ones are distinguished in their participation in this revelation by their capacity to transpose the integral into distinctive knowledge, with regard to that in which the Great, the Elevated in Himself *(al-muta'âlî)*, approaches them, and by reason of the traces of the infinite Plenitude *(al-kamâl)* which appear on their confines . . .

The 'Quality of Divinity' is manifested by Its effects, but It is not accessible to direct vision; one knows Its 'principle of action', but one cannot grasp Its contour. As for the Essence, It is evident without one knowing Its 'where'; one sees It directly without one being able to prove it . . .[58]

There is a secret which relates to the 'Quality of Divinity', and which consists in that each particular thing, be it pre-existent or ephemeral, non-manifested or manifested, implies in its essence all the other particular things which enter under the domination of the 'Quality of Divinity', – so that one may compare existences to mirrors confronted with each other, reflecting each one in the totality of the others. Now, considering that in each of these confronted mirrors one finds as many in one as in no matter which of the others, and that each one then contains in particular only that which it reflects itself, that is to say that it leaves outside itself all the multiple reflections reverberated by the other mirrors, – considering that, we say, it is correct to affirm that each single being contains only that which returns to his own essence and nothing more; but if on the contrary one considers that the totality of the mirrors is contained in each one of them, one may say that by rights each single being contains in him the totality of existences. In reality, all this question is like a husk enveloping the sense aspired to; it was posed to thee like a trap, so that thy bird falls in the noose of the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*; and so that thou wilt recognize thus in the Essence Itself that which reverts to Him of the Qualities. So leave the husk and take the kernel; be not of those who ignore the face, but take off the veil!

[58] We omit passages which comprise parables too closely linked to 'Arabisms' to be translatable without long commentaries.

OF UNITY *(al-aḥadiyah)*

THE WORD 'Unity' *(al-ahadiyah)* designates the revelation of the Essence in which appear neither the Names nor the Qualities nor any trace of their effects; it is then a Name of the Essence in so far as this is beyond all Divine and 'creaturial' comparisons. Now, there does not exist for the Unity, in all the cosmos, a single place of manifestation *(mazhar)* more perfect than thyself, when thou dost plunge thyself in thine own essence, forgetting all relation, and thou dost seize thyself by thyself, stripped of all thy appearances, so that thou art thyself in thyself and that all the Divine Qualities or the created attributes – which belong to thee in any case – none any longer relate to thee. It is this state of man that is the most perfect place of manifestation of the Unity in all existence.

And it is there the first 'descent' *(tanazzul)* of the Essence from the darkness of the 'Cloud' *(al-'amâ)*[59] towards the light of revelations, and also the first of all His revelations because of its purity and its absence of all Quality, all Name, allusion, relation or analogy; for all is contained in a non-manifested *(bâtin)* manner.

In ordinary language, the word 'unity' designates the principial determination *('ayn)* of the series of multiples. In parable, unity is as if someone sees from afar a wall made of masonry, of lime, of plaster and of wood, without nevertheless being able to distinguish anything of these materials; now, the unity of this wall is the totality of masonry, of lime, of plaster and of wood, not that the name 'wall' be a global designation of these things, but in so far as it designates such a form properly 'mural'.

In the same way, if thou art plunged in the contemplation of thy subject *(aniyah)* by which thou art thyself, thou art but witness of thine ipseity (or aseity: *huwiyah*)[60], without there appearing to thee in this state anything of the realities which relate to thee; however thou thyself art the synthesis of these realities. It is there thy unity, in so far as this affirms thine

[59] *Al-'amâ* means literally 'dark cloud': by this expression the Prophet designated the state 'in which God found Himself before the creation', that is to say the principial state, inaccessible to all distinctive knowledge.

[60] The 'Himself', the *Atma* of the Hindus.

essence with 'regard' to thine ipseity, not in so far as thou art the synthesis of the realities which define thee. Although thou be these relative realities, this state of essential revelation which is the affirmation of the Unity in thee, expresses the Essence by abstraction of all relation. Attributed to God, the Unity designates the purity of the Essence isolated from all the Names, from all the Qualities, from all cause and all effect. It is the supreme revelation because all other revelation will be necessarily particularized by something, with the exception of the 'Quality of Divinity' *(al-ulûhiyah)* which is distinguished only by its non-exclusivity. Unity is then the first manifestation *(zuhûr)*[61] of the Essence.

It is forbidden to the creature to attribute to himself the state of Unity, for the Unity is the pure Essence abstracted from the Divine and the created, whereas he, meaning the servant, is determined by the condition of the creature. Moreover, to attribute something to oneself signifies that it be rendered subject and to be used, which would be contrary to the principle of Unity, which for this reason never will belong to the creature; it belongs exclusively to God. If thou dost contemplate thyself in this state of revelation, thou dost contemplate thyself by virtue of thy God and thy Master; do not pretend, then, to possess this state in so far as thou art creature, for this state of revelation is not of those in which the creature (as such) can ever participate, but it belongs to God alone, as first essential revelation. Now, as thou knowest through thyself that thou art (in thy metaphysical reality, therefore supra-individual) that which one means by the Essence and the true sense of the creature is God *(al-ḥaqq)*, so judge the creature by re-entrenching him, and bear witness of God that He is that which is expressed by the Names and the Qualities, which come back to His Essence, so that thou dost bear witness of God to that which He bears witness of Himself.[62]

[61] The author here expresses himself in an elliptical manner, for he has just explained that the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)* corresponds to the principial state.

[62] The Sufi Mansûr al-Ḥallâj was condemned to death by the religious and social authorities for having pronounced the word: *Anâ-l-ḥaqq*, "I am God" (the 'Truth'); the contemporary Sufi masters, like al-Junayd, while recognizing that al-Ḥallâj had spoken "by the language of his spiritual state" and that he had spoken the truth, estimated however, with reason, that for the judges of the 'exterior' *(az-zâhir)* this word could only be that of an individual who pretended to be God.

OF THE UNICITY
(al-wâḥidiyah)

THE Unicity is a revelation of the Essence
Which appears as synthesis because of the distinction of my qualities,
All in It is unique and differentiated at the same time,
So admire the multiplicity essentially one!
In It, this one is that one, and that which goes is as that which comes.
It is the Divine Reality *(al-ḥaqîqah)* of the multiplicity
Contained in the Divine Solitude *(al-waḥdah)* without dispersion.
By It all finds itself again in the principle of each thing.
And in this respect the negation *(an-nafy)* is equal to the affirmation *(al-ithbât)*.[63]
The essential 'Discrimination' *(al-furqân)* is Its total form.
And the multiplicity of Qualities appearing in It is like that of the verses (in the Sacred Book).
Recite it then, and read in thy-self the secret (of His Book);
For it is thee, the 'Evident Model' *(al-imâm al-mubîn)* and it is in thee that is hidden 'the hidden Book' *(al-kitâb al-maknûn)*.[64]

Know that the word 'Unicity' *(al-wâḥidiyah)* designates the following revelation of the Essence: the Essence appears as Quality and the Quality as Essence, so that, in this respect, each Divine Quality is presented as the essential determination *(al-'ayn)* of each of the others. Thus, for example, the Avenger *(al-muntaqim)* is God Himself and God is the Avenger itself; elsewhere, the Avenger is the Beneficient *(al-mun'îm)* himself; similarly, the Unicity manifests Itself in the Grace *(an-ni'mah)* and is essentially manifested in the Vengeance; the Grace, which is an aspect of Mercy *(ar-raḥmah)*, is presented thus as the very essence of the Vengeance, which is an aspect of Punishment itself; and elsewhere, the Vengeance, which is none other than

[63] Allusion to the two parts of the *shahâdah;* "There is no God but He" *(lâ ilaha illa-Llâh)*.

[64] Koranic designations of the revealed Book.

the Punishment, is shown as an aspect of Grace which is identified to the Mercy. It is thus by virtue of the apparition of the Essence in the Qualities and in their effects.

In everything where the Essence is manifested according to the law of Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)*, It is the essential determination of every other thing; but this refers only to the Divine aspect of Unicity, not to the Essence in so far as It gives to all real things that which comes down to them from reality, because that would be the revelation of the Essence Itself.

The distinction between the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*, the Unicity *(al-wâḥidiyah)* and the 'Quality of Divinity' *(al-ulûhiyah)* consists in the fact that, in the Unity, none of the Names and the Qualities manifest themselves; it corresponds then to the pure Essence in its immediate actuality, whereas in the Unicity the Names and the Qualities and their activities are manifested, but with regard only to the Essence, not in a separate mode, so that each one therein is the essential determination of the other. As for the 'Quality of Divinity', there the Names and the Qualities are manifested according to that which is appropriate to each one of them; the Benefactor there is the contrary to the Avenger, and vice versa. It is the same of the other Names and Qualities; the Unity, however, appears in the 'Quality of Divinity' following that which the law of Unity Itself requires and following that which the law of Unicity requires, so that the 'Quality of Divinity', which englobes in its revelation the laws of all revelations, gives to all that is real that which comes to it from Reality.

The Unity corresponds to the Divine Word[65]: "God was[66] and there was not with Him a thing", and, following, the Unicity: "and He is now such as He was".

God said: "Everything is perishable except His Face."[67] It is for that, that the Unity is superior to Unicity, since it is the pure Essence, and that the 'Quality of Divinity' is superior to the Unity, since it gives it its reality; for the law of the 'Quality of Divinity' consists in the fact that it[68] is the supreme Name, the most complete, the most noble and the most excellent; its

[65] *Ḥadîth qudsî.*

[66] The past is employed in Arabic, as in Hebrew, to symbolize the eternal by analogy with the function of the past in linking of relative causality.

[67] Koran XXVIII, 88. The possessive pronoun may correspond to God or to the very thing, the Essence – designated precisely by the word 'Face' *(wajh)* – being one.

[68] That is to say the Name to which it corresponds, *Allâh*.

superiority over Unity is like the superiority of the whole over the part, whereas the superiority of Unity over the other revelations of the Essence is like that of the root over the branches. As for the superiority of Unicity over the rest of the revelations, it is like that of the Union over the separation.

So look for the meanings in thyself and meditate thereon!

OF THE COMPASSIONATE BEATITUDE *(ar-raḥmâniyah)*

In the Compassionate Beatitude *(ar-raḥmâniyah)*[69] are manifested the Divine Realities *(ḥaqâïq)* of the Names and the Qualities; it holds so to speak, the centre between that which corresponds exclusively to the Divine Essence, like the Names of the Essence[70], and that which has one face turned towards the creatures, like the Knower, the Powerful, the Hearer or other connections with the realities of existence.[71] In consequence, the term *ar-raḥmâniyah* synthesizes all the Divine Dignities to the exclusion of created orders so that there is a more 'exclusive' sense than that of *al-ulûhiyah*, by reason of the Divine Exclusivity Itself, for the 'Quality of Divinity' comprises the Divine principles as well as the 'creaturial' conditions. The connection between the 'Quality of Divinity' and the Compassionate Beatitude is, then, analogous to that which exists between the general and the particular. From this point of view the Compassionate Beatitude is more noble than the 'Quality of Divinity', since it designates the manifestation[72] of the Essence in the superior orders, and the priority out of reach of the inferior

[69] Derived from *ar-raḥmân* 'The Clement'. The substantive *raḥîm*, the most simple derivation from the same root RḤM ('to be merciful towards'), signifies 'womb'; the image of the matrix which conceives, envelopes and nourishes the child may illustrate in the best way that which Jîlî says on *ar-raḥmâniyah*.

[70] Like 'the One', 'the Unique', 'the Saint', etc.

[71] The totality of the Qualities having a face turned towards the creatures is understood in the Name *ar-rabb*, 'the Lord'. Of these Qualities, certain may be conceived as being orientated just as well towards the creatures as towards the Divinity Itself, as the Quality of Knowledge may have for object either creatures, or the Divinity. Others, such as, for example, the Quality of Judge – this being unable to judge Itself – are not conceivable without being put in correlation with creation; they are most particularly included in the Name *al-malik*, 'the King', which is, from this point of view, hierarchically inferior to the Name *ar-rabb*. The principal Divine Aspects are mentioned in the first half of the *Fâtiḥah* – the first verse of the Koran – which constitutes the essential element of the ritual prayer of Islam:

"Praise be to God(*Allâh*), the Lord *(rabb)* of the Universes,
The Compassionate *(ar-raḥmân)*, the Merciful *(ar-raḥîm)*
The King *(al-malik)* of the Day of Judgement . . ."

[72] It is a question, naturally, of principial manifestation.

orders. It is even, amongst the affirmations of the Essence, the only one which concerns especially the superior dignities under the aspect of the non-separativity.

Thus, the hierarchical connection between the Compassionate Beatitude and the 'Quality of Divinity' is comparable to that which exists between the sugar in the cane and sugar itself; sugar holds the supreme rank amongst all that one finds in the cane, but the cane contains the sugar just as well as other things. Now, if thou dost affirm the superiority of the sugar over the cane, that corresponds to the fact that thou dost precognize the superiority of the Compassionate Beatitude over the 'Quality of Divinity', but if thou dost affirm, on the contrary, the superiority of the cane, considering that it encompasses the sugar and other things also, it is as if thou dost affirm the superiority of the 'Quality of Divinity' over the Compassionate Beatitude.

The Name which is manifested in the dignity of this Beatitude is *ar-raḥmân* (the Compassionate); it summarizes the Names of the Essence and the seven Qualities of the Person, which are: Life, Knowledge, Power, Will, Word, Hearing, and Sight. As for the Names of the Essence, it is a question of Names such as the Unity, the Unicity, the Sanctity and those which resemble them. And all this comes back only to the Essence of which the Being is necessary; exalted be the Sanctity of the adored King.

One designates this Dignity (of *ar-raḥmâniyah)* by this Name because of the Compassion *(ar-raḥmah)* which encompasses all Divine or created order, for it is by the apparition of the Name *ar-raḥmân* in the Divine Dignities that the created orders were manifested.[73] The Universal Mercy flows from the presence of the Compassionate *(ar-raḥmân)*.

The first Mercy that God had for the existences was the manifestation[74] of the world from Himself – for He says: "And He subjugates for you that which is in the heavens and that which is

[73] So it is through the Divine Reality that expresses this Name that the possibilities of manifestation, principially contained in the Divine Being, were produced in existence. The Divine *raḥmah* is in a way the expansive principle which causes the Divine Infinity to 'overflow' *(afâda)* towards the relative possibilities, which in themselves are but pure limitation. According to Sufi symbolism, the world is produced by 'the Breath of Compassion' *(nafas ar-raḥmân)* and this Breath is elsewhere identified with the Universal Substance which deploys the existences in a distinctive manner and which is the 'plastic' support. See *'Du Soufisme'*, pages 37, 44, and 47.

[74] Literally: 'existentialisation'.

on the earth, all comes from Him". (Koran XLV, 12; 13). For this reason He manifests Himself in the existences revealing His perfection in each singular particle of the world, without His multiplying Himself by the multiplicity of His places of manifestation; for He remains Unique in all these places of manifestation, and One according to that which is required by His noble Essence in Itself.

It is to this apparition of God in all the least particles of existence that the initiates allude in speaking of the penetrating Being *(al-wujûd as-sârî)*, penetrating all existences. The secret of this penetration consists in that He created the world of Himself; but, as He is absolutely not divisible, every thing of the world is as it were entirely Himself. As for the name of the creature, it comes only to things as a loan; it is not, as some admit, that the Divine Qualities be lent to the servant; that which is lent to things is only their condition of creature, for the origin is the Principial Being.

God *(al-ḥaqq)*,[75] then, lends to His Essential Realities *(ḥaqâïq)* the name of creature so as to manifest the secrets of the 'Quality of Divinity' *(al-ulûhiyah)* and its possibilities of contrast. Thus God *(al-ḥaqq)* is, from this point of view, the 'hylé'[76] of the world. For God said, "We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them except by Truth *(al-ḥaqq)*" (Koran XV, 85 and XLVI, 2 : 3).

The world is comparable to the ice, and *al-ḥaqq* to the water which is the origin of this ice. Now, the name 'ice' is only lent to this coagulation, and it is the name water which is understood according to its Essential Reality *(ḥaqîqah)*.

Elsewhere I alluded to that in my ode *(qaṣîdah)* called "The Lights of Mystery in the Essential Singularities", – a sublime *qaṣîdah* of which time will never retrace the rich embroidery of truths and which this era will not understand. As for the allusion of which I have just spoken, it is found in the following passage:

In parable, the creation is like ice,
And it is Thou who art the gushing water.
The ice is not, if we realised it, other than its water,
And is not in this condition other than by the contingent laws.

[75] *Al-ḥaqq* is a Name of God employed above all in correlation with *al-khalq*, 'the creature'. For the meanings of the word *ḥaqq*, see note 33, page 12.

[76] The primordial substance. The substantial unity symbolizes here the principial Unity Itself.

But the ice will melt and its condition will dissolve,
The liquid condition will establish itself, certainly.
The contrasts are united in one single beauty.
It is in that that they are annihilated and it is from them that it radiates.

The Compassionate Beatitude *(ar-raḥmâniyah)* is the greatest Divine affirmation and the most perfect and the most synthetic revelation, and for this reason the Lordship *(ar-rubûbiyah)* is Its Throne *('arsh)*, the Royalty *(al-malikiyah)* Its Pedestal *(kursî)*, the Grandeur *(al-'azamah)* Its Canopy *(rafraf)*, the Power *(al-qudrah)* Its Bell *(jaras)*, and the Constraint *(al-qahr)* Its Ringing *(ṣalṣalah)*.

It is the Name *ar-raḥmân* which appears in it with all that which the Divine Plenitude *(al-kamâl)* includes, because It dominates and penetrates the existences and because Its principle rules them; and it is there (the meaning of the Koranic expression) "the Compassionate *(ar-raḥmân)* is seated on the Throne,"[77] for every thing in existence in which the Divine Essence is present in a dominating mode, is the throne of such and such an aspect of the Divine Essence, which aspect is manifested most particularly in It. As for the domination of the Compassionate, one means by that the act of God establishing Himself as Master of things by His Power, His Science, by His faculty to encompass the existences while being present in them, in the manner of he who is seated on a throne, and that in a transcendent manner, without his having localization *(ḥulûl)* of God, nor contact with the things; and how would the localization and the contact be possible, seeing that He is (essentially) the existences themselves? This mode of the Divine Presence in the existences is attached to His Name *ar-raḥmân*, because He is Compassionate for the created in manifesting Himself in them, in manifesting the created in Himself; for the two things are true. Know that if the imagination fashions some form in the mental (faculty), this imaginary form is created; but, in all creatures the Creator is present; on the other hand, this imagination is in thee, so that thou art, in connection with it, like God *(al-ḥaqq)*. The fashioning of (mental) forms necessarily comes from thee, but in God, and God *(al-ḥaqq)* is present there.[78]

[77] Koran XX, 4.

[78] All this passage comprises a double sense, in the same way that the expression *al-ḥaqq* signifies at once 'God' and 'the Truth'.

In this chapter I have just alluded to a secret of immense importance, by which one can know many Divine Mysteries, as for example the mystery of predestination and that of the Divine Science, which is a Unique Science embracing the Divine and the created; one may know that the Divine Power flows from the Unity by virtue of the Compassionate Beatitude which is like its place of revelation, and that the root of the (distinctive) knowledge is the Unicity, and that equally by virtue of the Compassionate Beatitude.[79] And behind all that there are the subtle allusions. So meditate on these things since the beginning of the chapter, throw away the rind and take the core, God gives success to rectitude.

Know that *ar-raḥmân* (the Compassionate) and *ar-raḥîm* (the Merciful) are two Names derived from *ar-raḥmah* (the Mercy), but the significance of *ar-rahmân* is more general and that of *ar-raḥîm* more exclusive and (in a certain sense) more perfect: *ar-raḥmân* is more general because it manifests its *raḥmah* (Mercy) in all the existences, and *ar-raḥim* is more exclusive because its *raḥmah* is addressed only to the elected. The Mercy of *ar-raḥmân* is mixed with punishment like a forbidding and malodorant medicine which, although it be a *raḥmah* for the patient, contains something which is contrary to his constitution, whereas the *raḥmah* of *ar-raḥîm* is troubled by no mixture, it is pure beatitude, and one finds it only in people of perfect beatitude. As for the Mercy with which God regaled His own Qualities and Names in manifesting their activities and their effects, it comes from the Mercy ruled by the Name *ar-raḥîm*, in such a way that *ar-raḥîm* is contained in *ar-raḥmân*, like the individual Essence *(al-'ayn)* in the physical constitution *(al-haykal)*[80] in the human being: one of the two is more noble, more exclusive and more elevated, however the other synthesizes the whole. This is why one says that *ar-raḥîm* manifests its full Mercy only in the other side, because it is too vast for this inferior world, and because all beatitude of this world is necessarily troubled by a mixture, so that it attaches itself to revelations from the Compassionate Beatitude *(ar-raḥmâniyah)*.

[79] That is to say that the Power and the Knowledge flow from the aspects of the Unity, but that they presuppose at the same time the 'expansive' principle which is *ar-raḥmâniyah*.

[80] Literally: 'temple', 'sanctuary'.

OF THE DIVINE OBSCURITY *(al-'amâ)*

THE Divine Obscurity is the primordial place
Where the suns of beauty set.
It is the Being of God-self *(nafsu nafsi-Llâh)*
By which He is, and from which He never proceeds,
So that He does not change.
His symbol is the latent state of fire in the silex.
If fire emanates from a stone,
It still is not separated, in principle and in its latent state;
It exists there always, unmanifested,
And its manifestation changes nothing of its principial state.
We showed you a spectator,
Blind to his own subject[81]; God, exalted may He be, does not compare!
It is the consternation of the intelligences
In their impotence to grasp that which, for them, is obscurity.
It is the Divine Self, not because It includes the shadows,
But because It includes lights, if one understands well.
Other than the unknowable Unity,
Or the Unicity knowable by the multiple,
Incomprehensible in Itself, withdrawn from all vision,
One calls It the Divine Obscurity.

By Divine 'Obscurity' one means the Reality of Realities *(ḥaqîqat al-ḥaqâîq)* which could not be qualified as 'Divinity' or 'creature', being pure Essence without connection with any degree, Divine or creaturial, so that one cannot attribute to It Quality or Name. It is there the sense of the Prophet's word: "There is no air above the Dark Cloud *(al-'amâ)*, nor below It," that is to say: there is no Divinity above, nor created nature underneath. The Divine Obscurity is then the step-father of the Unity *(al-aḥadiyah)*: in the same way that every Name and every Quality is effaced in the Unity, in which nothing is manifested,

[81] This recalls the 'Advaïtic' doctrine on the Knowing Subject who cannot take possession of Himself. The Essence in fact, is also the Absolute Subject.

neither is anything manifested nor revealed in the Divine Obscurity. There is nevertheless a distinction to make between the Divine Obscurity and the Unity, in the sense that the Unity affirms the Essence in the Essence by exaltation; it is the Essential Unique manifestation, whereas the Divine Obscurity is the Essence with respect to Its Absolute Reality, Reality of which one understands nothing, so sublime is It, or minute; it is the obscure non-manifestation of the Essence, logically opposed to the supreme manifestation which is the Unity; this one reveals the purity of the Essence, just as that one is hidden by the purity of the Essence. God, however, is too sublime for Him to hide from Himself by some manifestation, or for Him to be manifested to Himself outside a state of occultation; but He is found eternally in the states of occultation, of non-manifestation or of manifestation which flow from His Essence, in the same way that He always possesses His activities, His aspects, His connections, relations, Names and Qualities, without His changing or transposing Himself, without His vesting one thing in leaving another, or that He divests Himself of one thing to seize another; the principle of His Essence remains always just as It was, It always will be just as It is, – "There is no change for the nature of God"[82], – all these changes or evolutions in forms and elsewhere, in all that is relation or connection, arising only from the modes according to which God reveals Himself to us, while He remains in Himself eternally just as He was before He manifested Himself to us. But, whatever may be these modes, His Essence assumes but one single state of revelation *(tajallî)*, that is to say the one which is Essential to Him, so that He has but one single irradiation *(tajallî)* which possesses only one single Name, and to which there corresponds but one single Quality; for first and last, there exists but one, exempt from all multiplicity; it is He who reveals Himself to Himself for ever and ever, as He is revealed in all eternity . . .

It is this state of Unique revelation that is exclusive to Him, so that the creature never participates therein, for this state does not assume aspects nor internal divisions, nor attribution, nor qualities nor anything similar; if the creature could participate therein, it would be necessary for him to have the aspects, the

[82] This verse may also be translated by "There is no change for the creation (= the act of creation) by God." (Koran XXX, 29).

relations, the qualities or something of this order; but all that is excluded from this world of revelation which is Essentially His own, from the non-beginning to the non-end. On the contrary, all the other revelations, which relate to the Essence, to the Divinity, to the Activities, to the Qualities or to the Names, always correspond, although Essentially they belong to Him, to His manifestation towards His creatures. In a general manner, no sort of revelation prevents Him being in this state of Essential revelation, but all the other modes of revelation depend on it, like the planets depend on the Sun, from which they receive their light, in the same way, all the other revelations are but a reflection from the sky of this supreme revelation, or a drop from its ocean; while still being real, they are annihilated however under the power of this Essential revelation, which is exclusively God's by virtue of His Knowledge of Himself, whereas the other revelations are God's by virtue of the Knowledge of others.[83]

Now, after having exposed to thee that the Divine Obscurity is the Essence Itself in relation to Its Absolute non-manifestation, and that Unity is the Essence Itself in relation to Its supreme affirmation, abstracted from all internal connection, we may say that these expressions 'in relation to Its non-manifestation' or 'in relation to Its supreme affirmation' do not confer a valid sense, for the Divine Obscurity has no connection with non-manifestation, nor the Unity any connection with manifestation.

Know that with regard to thyself thou art in a state of obscurity – "to God is the supreme symbol"[84] – in this sense that the totality will scarcely manifest itself to thee, whatever may be the horizon of thy knowledge of thyself; now, in this respect, thou art an essence hidden in obscurity; hast thou not learnt that God is thine essence in thine ipseity *(huwiyah)*?[85] Now, thou art not conscious of that which eminently is thy reality: thou art then, with regard to thyself in the darkness, although, in relation to the Divine Reality, thou art not veiled from thyself, for the principle of this reality requires that It be not unconscious of Itself; it follows that thou art Divinely revealed to thyself and at the same time, because of thy created nature, unconscious of thy Divine

[83] Following the contexts, we translate *tajallî* by 'unveiling', 'revelation' or 'irradiation'; the idea of *tajallî* may be defined by this image: when the sun 'unveils itself' *(tajallâ)*, its light 'irradiates' *(tajallâ)* in the world.

[84] Koran XVI, 62.

[85] Or 'aseity'.

Reality; thou art, then, simultaneously manifested and hidden from thyself. This then is one of these symbols "that God formulated for mankind"[86] and which is not understood except by those who know.

When the Prophet was asked where God was to be found before creation, he replied: "in the darkness", because manifestation always proceeds from a state of non-manifestation, although there it is only a question of an anteriority purely principial, not temporal. God is too sublime for there to be between Him and His creation a temporal relationship; in the same way that there is, between Him and it, neither separation, nor discontinuity, nor a relationship of constraint, since all these relationships are themselves created and therefore could not be interposed between God and His creatures, – unless one concludes in a chain without end, which would be absurd. There is no doubt that His anteriority like His posteriority, His priority like His ulteriority, are but principial aspects and not temporal or spatial relationships; in the same way that He was in the darkness before the creation, He is necessarily in this state after the creation. It follows that the Divine Obscurity is the principial state of the Essence exempt from all connection, whereas the creation demands manifestation which, itself, follows the connection which the Essence may assume; such is the state of principial anteriority, and such the state of posteriority; but there is no 'before' nor 'after', since He is before and after, He is the First and the Last; what a mystery, that His manifestation should be His non-manifestation itself! That is not only true in a certain respect, or under such and such an aspect, or from a certain point of view; but this is really that. His priority is essentially His ulteriority, His anteriority is His posteriority; the intelligences are in consternation and can only conceive His immensity; for no idea would be able to encompass His forms.

[86] Koran XXIV, 35.

OF THE UNVEILING *(tajallî)* OF THE DIVINE ACTIVITIES *(al-af'âl)*

THE revelation of God in His Activities corresponds to a contemplative state *(mashhad)* where the servant sees the Divine Power *(al-qudrah)* evolve in things. He sees God as the author of their movement and their rest, all action being abstracted from the creature and attributed to God alone. In this contemplation, the servant is stripped of all power, strength and will of his own.

The contemplatives participate in this spiritual state in different manners. To some, God shows first His Will and then His Action, and the servant thus finds himself stripped of power, of action and of will. That is the most perfect contemplation of the Divine Activities. To others, God shows His Will, by making them contemplate His dispositions in the creatures and the evolution of these under the domination of His Power. Some see the Divine Act *(al-amr)* in the very instant where the action takes place by the side of the creature, so that they attribute it to God alone; others contemplate it retrospectively when the action has already manifested itself on the created side. In any case, he who has had this last vision of things may only be justified if his vision concerns others, not if it is in connection with himself, unless it is a question of an action obeying the exterior rules of the religion. On the other hand, when God reveals to someone first His Will, then His disposition in him, before even the action has taken place on the part of the man – either in the man or from him, – we accept this vision as legitimate, we look for it even by the laws of religion; if the man having this vision of things is sincere, his relation towards God will be pure.

If I say that the vision of this last be justified, whereas we cannot justify the vision of the other who sees the Divine impulse only after the action, it is the same as saying that neither the one nor the other may be justified if they refer to the Divine Power in something which would be in contradiction with the 'order' *(al-amr)* or the 'defence' *(an-nahy)*, whereas the act, in its

apparent form, requires precisely this discrimination.[87] We apply, then, the discrimination to that which is the object of discrimination according to the Sacred Law, and that because the very principle of the Divine revelation (which is in question) imposes it on us: in fact, he who is in this state of contemplation acts according to the Divine Principle, and so it is right that we judge him conforming to his own contemplation; it is by that that God obliges him, in the same way that we are obliged to judge the impious according to that which God prescribes to us in His Book. All this consideration, then, returns definitely to that which I have said of the intimate relation of the contemplative towards God, the sincerity of which relation guarantees the soundness of the vision. As for my remark concerning he who is conscious of the Divine impulse only after the action, that is to say that he can only be justified by his contemplation of another, not of himself, except for he who bases himself on the revealed Book *(al-kitâb)* and the Sacred Custom *(as-sunnah)*, it was said so that the contemplative does not accept such a thing of his own accord, for the hypocrite who accomplishes an impious action says equally: "It is by the Will, the Power and the Divine Actions that it was manifested, and it is nothing to do with me." Yet, such a spiritual degree *(maqâm)* does exist.

Some see themselves as the object of Divine Action; their own action follows that of God. They consider themselves as obedient in an action conforming to Divine prescriptions, and they consider themselves as disobedient when the action is contrary to these prescriptions, while still being, themselves, despoiled of all their own power, force and will. Others are not conscious of their own action at all; they see only the action of God. Such a man does not at all consider himself as author of an action, he would not say he was obedient in the action conforming to the Sacred Law, nor would he say he was disobedient in a contrary action. In this category of contemplatives, there are to be found those, who having partaken of thy meal, swear afterwards that they have not eaten, who drink and swear they have not drunk; then they swear that they have not sworn, and in the view of God they will be sincere and truthful. There is there a point that only he who has himself tasted and really lived this contemplative state will understand.

[87] The Divine Will manifests Itself in three forms: the Order *(al-amr)*, the Defence *(an-nahy)* and the Permission *(al-idhn)*.

Some contemplate the action of God only in another and not in themselves, that is to say in that which concerns them individually. Others contemplate the action of God only in themselves and not in others, and this contemplation is superior to the first.

Some contemplate the action of God in themselves for the acts conforming to the Divine prescriptions, whereas they do not see the influence of the Divine Power in the transgressions. The fact is they contemplate God by virtue of His revelation in the conforming acts, while God hides His action in them for the transgressions, through Mercy, so that they do not fall into disobedience: it is there a sign of their weakness, for if they were strong, they would see God act in them for the transgressions as for the obedience, their conformity to the exterior Law being preserved.[88]

To others, the Divine Action is revealed only in the transgressions; they are thus tested by God, being unable to contemplate Him in the acts of obedience. He who has this Quality is found in one of these two cases: that God hides Himself from him in the acts of obedience, because he desires to be obedient and he prefers obedience to any other thing, so that there God hides Himself from him and reveals Himself in the transgressions, so that there he sees God and in that way he attains Divine Plenitude – the sign of that is that he returns to obedience and does not continue to transgress – or that this man falls gradually, until he establishes himself in the disobedience; in this case, God hides Himself from him (definitely), and he remains forever in sin; may God preserve us!

Yet others contemplate God sometimes in obedience, sometimes in the contrary . . .

Some, contemplating the Divine Action in the disobedience, are unappeased, but cry and distress themselves and become sad and ask God to pardon them and to preserve them from transgressions, while they throw themselves under the compulsion of the Divine Power; it is there the proof of their sincerity, of the purity of their vision and of the absence of individual desire in that which has been destined to them. Others do not distress themselves, are not saddened and do not ask to be preserved from transgressions, but remain calm under the flow of the

[88] The transgressions in question, then, are but interior or virtual; they are transgressions in relation to that which is required by Saintliness.

Power and act as It turns them, without there finding any sensation. That is the proof of the strength of their intuition in this state of contemplation, which is superior to the first, if he does not mingle therein any suggestion of the soul.

In others God will transform their disobedience into obedience, so that their actions will not be counted as transgressions by God. In others, their apparent disobedience is in itself obedience, since it is conforming to the Divine Will, although the Divine Commandment contradicts that which the Divine Will requires of them. In this state, the servant will be disobedient with regard to the Commandment and at the same time disobedient and conforming to the Will. The fact is that he contemplates, before the action, the Divine Will with regard to him; he is, then, in reality conforming to the Divine Will, while still seeing the influence of the Divine Power on him and how God turns him this way and that.[89]

Some are tested by that which God reveals of Himself to them in something that is blameworthy at once in his essence and according to the exterior Law; they contemplate God casting them in heresy, and they abandon themselves there, knowing all the time that they are heretics.[90] It is that they are determined by the apparition of God in such or such an action . . .[91]

Now, know that in these men who contemplate the Divine Activities, the essential remains veiled, whatever may be the greatness of their spiritual degree and the clarity of their vision. They ignore of the Reality more than they know of it, for the revelation of God in His Activities is a veil for His revelation in His Names and His Qualities. May that suffice for the subject of the contemplation of Activities, which contains still many other states; for in this book we are following a middle path between the succinct exposition and the development.

God tells the truth, and it is He who guides on the right way.

[89] These considerations are very instructive in that which concerns the 'sins' of David and Solomon.

[90] It is not a question of intrinsic heresy, that is to say error, but extrinsic heresy, so simply formal incompatibility; in this case, there is 'error' or 'sin' in the form, not in itself, but in relation to the form revealed which is necessarily exclusive.

[91] So there are contemplative states from which the manifestation goes beyond the framework of the Sacred Law given for the community.

OF THE UNVEILING *(tajallî)* OF THE DIVINE NAMES

WHEN God, the Most High, reveals Himself to one of His servants by a Name, this servant is delighted beyond himself under the fulgurations of the Divine Name, so that, if then thou dost invoke God by this Name, it is the servant who will answer thee, the Divine Name will apply henceforth to him.

The first degree of this spiritual order, is the contemplation of God revealing Himself as He-who-exists *(al-mawjûd)*,[92] and this Name is connected from then on to the adorer himself. Beyond this degree, God reveals Himself first by His Name the Unique *(al-wâḥid)*, then by the Name *Allâh*; at this point, the servant faints under the Divine irradiation, his mountain is cleaved, and God *(al-ḥaqq)* calls him from the peak of Sinai from his Essential Reality *(ḥaqîqah)*: "Verily, I am God, there is no other God but Me; adore Me!" (Koran XX, 14); then God effaces the Name of the servant and establishes in its place the name *Allâh*, so that if thou sayest: *Allâh*! the servant answers thee: "I am at thy disposition!"

If the servant is lifted higher and God fortifies him and confirms him, after his extinction *(fanâ)*, in the state of subsistence *(baqâ)*, God will reply Himself to whoever invokes this servant: thus for example, when thou sayest: "O Muhammed!" it is God who will answer thee: "I am at thy disposition!"

Then, if the servant continues his ascension, God reveals Himself to him by the Name the Compassionate *(ar-raḥmân)*, then by the Name the Lord *(ar-rabb)*, then by the Name the King *(al-malik)*, then by the Name the Knowing *(al-'alîm)*, then by the Name the Powerful *(al-qâdir)*; each of these Names implies a revelation superior to that which the preceding Name confers, for God is communicated in a more perfect manner by revealing Himself distinctly: when He reveals Himself to His adorer as the Compassionate, He differentiates by that His global revelation, expressed by the Name *Allâh*; in the same way, when He manifests Himself as the Lord, He differentiates His revelation –

[92] Or more precisely: 'He who is Real'; the word 'exist', which contains a suggestion of relativity, has here a completely symbolic function.

relatively global – 'The Compassionate', and He differentiates his manifestation 'The Lord' by virtue of the Name 'The King'. This order is the inverse of that which applies to the manifestations of the Essence to Itself, manifestations of which the excellence diminishes from the Universal to the particular, the Compassionate being superior to the Lord, and *Allâh* superior to the one and the other. By virtue of this inverse analogy between the hierarchy of the manifestations of the Essence and the hierarchy of the 'nominal relations', the adorer exhausts the revelations of Names – of which the intrinsic value is always the Essence – by being subjected to each one of them, for each Divine Name requires it in its turn and is applied to him as to its own subject. It is then that the bird of his inmost being will sing on the branches of its Holy Reality:

To he who invokes the Names of my well Beloved, I reply;
I call, and Laylâ[93] replies to my call.
It is thus because we are but one single spirit;
You call us two bodies, it is strange;
We are as one single person having two names and one single essence.
By whatever Name thou dost invoke the Essence, that is the Name which will visit thee.
My essence is His Essence, and my name is His Name.
My relation towards It, is that I am engulfed in the Union.
In Reality we are not two essences in a single being,
But the lover is himself the Beloved.

A strange thing, the man who receives the revelations of the Divine Names, contemplates nothing but the pure Essence, without his being conscious of the Name which It reveals to him; nevertheless, one discerns the Divine Name which dominates him, because the contemplative refers to the Essence by the Name which rules at that very instant of this contemplation of the Essence.

In this contemplation through the Divine Names, men differ from each other. We may talk of some of their ways, without describing all, as it is impossible to enumerate all the Divine Names and especially all the ways of approach to each of these

[93] Name of the beloved of the illustrious Majnûn (the 'possessed') who frequently is taken as the symbol of the contemplative lost in Divine Love; Laylâ is in that case, the Divine Reality *(al-ḥaqîqah)*.

Names; for the men who receive the Divine Revelation by one and the same Divine Name differ, however, by their attitudes. So I will mention of all that only that which happened to me during my own spiritual journey to God; moreover, I recount nothing in this book, neither of myself nor of another, without my having tested it myself at the time when I travelled in God by the path of intuition *(al-kashf)* and of direct vision *(al-mu'âyanah)*. I return, then, to that which I was going to say of the different manners by which men receive the revelations of the Divine Names; to some, God reveals Himself as the Ancient of Days *(al-qadîm)*, and they accede to this revelation by the intuition of their pre-existence in the Divine Knowledge: they realise that they were before the creation, consequently that the Divine Knowledge, of which they themselves are the object, was of all eternity. God is essentially Knowing; but, the object of the Knowledge cannot be separated from It, for it is through consideration of Its object that the knowledge is knowledge; in other words, it is the knowledge of the object which defines the nature of the knowing subject, so that, if the knowledge is eternal, its object also must be eternal; from whence it follows that beings pre-exist in the Divine Knowledge. So some come to God by virtue of His Name the Ancient of Days; when the Antiquity of the Essence unveils Itself to them, their ephemeral existence fades away, and they subsist eternally through God, unconscious of their temporal condition.

To others God reveals Himself as the Truth *(al-ḥaqq)*, and they accede to it because God uncovers to them the Divine Truth expressed in the Koranic word: "We have not created the Heavens and the Earth and all that is between them except by the Truth." (XV, 85 and XLVI, 2;3). When the Essence unveils Itself by Its Name the Truth, the created nature of the contemplative fades away, and there subsists only His Holy and transcendent Essence.

To others, God reveals Himself by His Name the Unique *(al-wâḥid)*, and He leads them to this revelation by showing them the intrinsic Unity of the world, which proceeds from the Divine Essence as the waves emanate from the ocean; they contemplate the manifestation of God in the multitude of creatures who are differentiated by virtue of the Divine Unicity; from then on, their mountain is split asunder; he who invokes falls in faintness; his multiplicity dissolves in the solitude of the Unique; the creatures

are as if they had never been, and God as if He never ceases.[94]

To others, God reveals Himself by the Name the Most Holy *(al-quddûs)*, and they accede to this revelation in that they understand intuitively the secret of the Divine word: "And I blew into him My Spirit" (meaning the body of Adam; Koran, XV, 29; XXXVIII, 72); God teaches them that the Spirit of God is none other than God Himself, and that it is Holy and transcendent. Now, as soon as God unveils Himself in His Name the Most Holy, the servant is stripped of the impurities of existence and subsists through God, transcending all ephemerity.

To others God reveals Himself through His Name the Apparent *(az-zâhir)*; they have the intuition of the Divine Light manifesting Itself in corporal things, and they recognize through that, that it is God alone who appears. But, as soon as God unveils Himself as the Apparent, the servant is extinguished with all creation, non-manifested as such, in the manifestation of the Divine Being.

To others, God reveals Himself by His Name the Interior *(al-bâtin)*, and they accede to it by the intuition that things subsist only through God, who is the interior reality. As soon as God unveils Himself as the Interior, the manifestation of the servant, projected by the Divine Light, is extinguished; God becomes the interior of the servant, and he the exterior of God.

As for the Divine revelation through the Name *Allâh*, the path which leads there cannot be limited; moreover, it is the same for the revelation of every other Divine Name, as we said above; one could not fix definitely the ways of access to these revelations, for their modalities vary by virtue of the human receptacles. When God reveals Himself to His servant through the Name of *Allâh*, the soul of the servant is extinguished, and God puts Himself in its place, purifying his temple of shackles of ephemerity, and breaking the bond which attaches it to existences; then, He[95] is alone by His Essence and alone by His Qualities, knowing neither fathers nor mothers. – "Remember God, and God will remember thee"; contemplate God and God will contemplate thee! – Then he sings by the language of his state:

[94] In reality, He never ceases; the parallelism of the two phrases indicates simply that for the contemplative finding himself in this state of extinction, the end of this state is not conceivable.

[95] This pronoun is voluntarily ambiguous; it may refer either to God, or to the delivered being.

It[96] drew me, substituting Itself to me in me;
It replaced me, certainly, but where then am I now?
I became It, and It is myself;
There exists for It no singular being which desires It.
I subsist through It in It; there exists no 'thou' between us.
My state with It was in the past as it will be in the future,
However, I have elevated my soul, and It has removed the partition;
I have awoken from my sleep, and arisen from my bed.
It has shown me to myself through the eye of my Essential Reality;
It is on the forehead of the Beauty that I read these characters.
I have polished my interior beauty, before the mirror
Where the traits of Plenitude are printed.
Its Qualities are mine, my essence is His,
And in Its virtues the sun of Beauty arises for me.
My Name is really Its Name; and the Name of Its Essence is my name,
And all these attributes come to me through nature.

To others again, God reveals Himself by His Name the Compassionate *(ar-raḥmân)*. The fact is that God, revealing Himself to them by His Name *Allâh*, directs them by His own Essence towards the supreme Divine degree, which synthesizes the aspects of the Glory and which penetrates all existences; that is the path which leads to the revelation of the Essence by the Name the Compassionate.[97] In this state of unveiling, the spiritual actuality of the servant desires that the Divine Names descend onto him one after the other, and that he receives them according to the amount of that which God placed in him of His Essential Light. The Names succeed each other until the servant receives the Divine revelation by the Name the Lord *(ar-rabb)*; then there descend on him the Names of the Divine Person *(an-nafs)*, which are found under the domination of the Name the Lord and synthesize the aspects of the Divine and of the created, like the Knower *(al-'alîm)*, the Powerful *(al-qâdir)* and others like them. Their series leads to the Name the King *(al-malik)*; when the servant receives this and God unveils Himself to him essentially,

[96] The Divine Reality *(al-ḥaqîqah)*.

[97] That is to say that the differentiation of the Divine Light reintegrating bit by bit all the cosmic aspects of the servant, operates spontaneously from the moment of a first global 'contact' with the Essence.

all the other Names, in all their plenitude, equally descend on him the one after the other, until the Name the Subsistent *(al-qayyûm)*. When the servant receives this last one and God reveals Himself to him by this Name, he passes from the 'unveiling of the Divine Names' to the 'unveiling of the Divine Qualities'.[98]

[98] As the author has led us to understand above, there can be a question here, only of a sort of ideal schemata of the spiritual process, a schemata which has, moreover, its correspondences in certain ways founded on the invocation of a series of Divine Names; the Qadirite rule is particularly explicit with regard to this. (Cf. Mehemmed Ali Aïnî, *Abd-al-Kadir Guilânî*, Paris, Genthner, 1938.)

OF THE UNVEILING *(tajallî)* OF THE DIVINE QUALITIES

WHEN God reveals Himself to His servant in one of His Qualities, the servant soars in the sphere of this Quality until he has reached the limit by way of integration *(al-ijmâl)*, not by distinctive knowledge, for those who realise the Divine Qualities do not have distinctive knowledge except by virtue of integration. If the servant soars in the sphere of a Quality, and he realises it entirely by (spiritual) integration, he is seated on the throne of this Quality, so that he assimilates it into himself and becomes its subject; from then on, he encounters another Quality, and so on until he realises all the Divine Qualities. Let that not confuse thee, my brother, for, as for the servant, God, wanting to reveal Himself to him by a Name or by a Quality, extinguishes him, annihilates his self and his existence; then, when the creaturial light is put out, and the individual spirit is effaced, God causes to reside in the creaturial temple *(haykal)*, without his having for that a Divine localization *(ḥulul)*[99], a subtle reality[100] which will be neither detached from God nor joined to the creature, thus replacing that which He stripped from him, for God reveals Himself to His servants by generosity; if He annihilated them without compensation, it would not be by generosity on his part, but by rigour; far be it from Him that it should be thus! This subtle reality is that which one calls the Holy Ghost *(ar-rûḥ al-quds)*. Now, since God establishes, from His Essence, a subtle reality in the place of the servant, His revelation is communicated to this reality, so that He reveals Himself only to Himself, although we then call this Divine Subtle Reality 'servant', seeing that it takes his place; or: there is there neither servant nor Lord, for if the servant no longer exists, the Lord ceases to be Lord; in reality, there is nothing more than God

[99] It is to avoid the error of the 'localization' or 'inhabitation' of God that Islam rejects the Christian dogma of incarnation; for the same reason, the Christian doctrine insists on the distinction of the two natures of Christ.

[100] Here, the term 'subtle' *(latîf)* means a non-corporal reality, intangible, 'supranatural' if one likes, and not simply a physical reality.

alone, the Unique, the One.

The creature has being only by contingent attribution,
In reality it is nothing.
When the Divine Lights appear,
They efface this attribution,
So that the creatures were not, nor ceased to be.
God extinguished them, but in their essences, they have never existed,
And in their extinction they subsist . . .
When they are annihilated, the Being returns to God;
He is then such as He was before they became;
The servant becomes as if he had never existed,
And God is as if nothing had ever ceased.
However, when the Divine fulgurations appear,
The creature is invested from the Light of God and becomes one with Him.
He extinguishes him, then He substitutes Himself for him;
He lives in the place of the creatures, and yet they have never occupied anything.
Like waves, of which the principle is the unity of the sea,
And which, in their multitude, are united by it;
When it is in movement, it is the waves which are it in their totality,
And when it is calm, there are neither waves nor multiplicity.

Know that the unveilings of the Divine Qualities are but the assimilation, by the essence of the servant, of the Qualities of the Lord, this assimilation being innate, principial and definite, in the same manner that a quality attaches itself to its own subject. And that must be understood, as we were saying, in this sense that the Divine Subtle Reality, which substitutes Itself for the servant and occupies the organism *(al-haykal)*, Itself assimilates the Divine Qualities in an innate, principial and definitive manner, so that it is God alone who attributes to Himself the Qualities which are His, the servant having nothing to do with it.

Men participate in this revelation of the Divine Qualities according to their spiritual receptivities, according to the continuity of their wisdom and the force of their decision.

The servant to whom God reveals Himself by the Quality of

Life, becomes himself the life of the entire world; he sees the unfolding of his own life in all that exists, bodies and spirits. He contemplates ideas like forms which take their life from he himself; there will exist for him neither forms derived from ideas – like words and acts – nor subtle forms – like spirits – nor corporal forms of which he will not be the life, and he will be conscious of the manner in which this life emanates from him. He realises that directly, without intermediary, by an intuition that is essentially Divine and mysterious. I myself was in this state during a certain time; I contemplated the life of beings in myself, and I distinguished in what measure each one of them participated in my life; but, each one of them participated according to its own essence; however I was unique in my life and without internal separativity. That lasted until the hand of the Divine Assistance transported me towards another state of knowledge, – and yet there is no 'other'.

To some, God reveals Himself in the Quality of the Knowledge *(al-'ilm)*. For, God being revealed in the Life which penetrates everything, the servant tastes, by the Unity of this Life, all that which constitutes the nature of things: from then on, the Essence reveals Itself to him in the cognitive quality, so that he will know the entire universe with the deployment of all his worlds, from their origin to their return in the principle; he knows of all things how it was, how it is and how it will be; he knows that which did not exist and that which, not existing, was not non-existing; he knows how would be that which is not, if that ever was. Of all that he has an innate knowledge, principial and intuitive, through his own essence and by virtue of his penetration at once integral and distinctive of the objects of knowledge; he knows by a distinctive manner in his integration, although his knowledge is realised in pure non-manifestation *(ghayb al-ghayb)*.

He who realises the Divine Essence draws his distinctive intellections in the pure non-manifestation, bringing them forth from the non-manifested to the conscience of the objective world; he is conscious of the differentiation of his integral knowledge – differentiation which operates in the relative non-manifestation – and he knows at the same time the total integration in the absolute non-manifestation.[101] As for he who participates in the Divine Qualities, he has only the knowledge which

[101] Between the two extreme poles of the pure or absolute non-manifestation *(ghayb al-ghayb* or *al-ghayb al-mutlaq)* and the 'objective' consciousness

is apportioned to him directly in the pure non-manifestation. This is a discourse which only the 'strangers' (to the world) will understand and which is savoured only by the most faithful, the most 'polished' (towards God).

To some, God reveals Himself in the Quality of the Sight *(al-baṣar)*. For, revealing Himself first by the total intellectual vision which penetrates everything, God will reveal Himself more particularly in the Quality of Sight, so that the sight of the servant will become the organ of his knowledge; there is not from then on either Divine Science or creaturial science which is not the object of the servant's vision; he sees beings just as they are in the pure non-manifestation; however – a strange thing – he is ignorant of them in his exterior consciousness. So consider this sublime vision; what is there that exists that is more astonishing and more delicious? The fact is that the servant who realises the Divine Qualities does not partake in his created nature, of that which embraces his Divine nature; so there is no conjunction; I mean that that which he realises in his non-manifested state appears in his 'objective' consciousness only in an accidental manner, and for certain things only, which God manifests to him by generosity. The servant who realises the Essence, on the contrary, knows the objective world by his non-manifested reality, and he knows the non-manifestation 'objectively'; he connects, then, the one to the other.

To some God reveals Himself through the auditory Quality *(as-sam')*, so that they hear the enunciations of minerals, of plants and animals, likewise the language of the angels and other languages; distant things are manifested to them as nearby things. The fact is that the servant to whom God reveals Himself by the auditory Quality, hears by virtue of the Unity of this Quality all the diverse languages as well as the subtle call of the minerals and plants. In this state of unveiling I heard the science of the Compassionate Beatitude *(ar-raḥmâniyah)* expressed by the Compassionate *(ar-raḥmân)*; from that I learnt the recitation of the Koran; I was the rhythm and He was the measure. But that will only be understood by the 'people of the Koran', who are

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(ash-shahâdah), poles which correspond respectively to the principial and undifferentiated state and the individual human consciousness, is situated the relative non-manifestation *(al-ghayb al-mudâfiyy)* which Jîlî calls simply non-manifestation *(ghayb)*; it is that which one could call the subtle world of ideas.

chosen amongst the people of God.

To others, God reveals Himself by the Quality of the Word *(al-kalâm)*; from then on, the beings exist through the word of the servant. God, we were saying, reveals Himself first to His servant by the Quality of Life, then He teaches him, by the cognitive Quality, the secret of the Divine Life in him, then He teaches him to see, then hear; it is then that the servant 'speaks' through the force of the Unity of his life, so that beings exist through his word. At the same time he is conscious, in a non-temporal manner, that his words never will be exhausted. It is in this state of revelation, equally, that God speaks to His servants without the veil of the Names and before these are manifested.

Some – of those who realise the Divine Word – hear in themselves the call of the Essential Reality *(al-ḥaqîqah)*, without this call reaching them, by whatever side they perceive it, by a sensory organ; the servant listens to it with his totality and he hears Him say to him: "Thou art My friend; thou art My beloved; thou art the object; thou art My face amongst My servants; thou art the ultimate term; thou art the supreme goal; thou art My intimate conscience amongst the consciences; thou art My Light amongst the lights; thou art My eye; thou art My ornament; thou art My Beauty; thou art My Perfection; thou art My Name; thou art My Essence; thou art My Attribute; thou art My Qualities. I am thy name; I am thy form; I am thy characters; I am thy mark, My friend! It is thee, the quintessence of beings; it is thee the goal of existence and becoming. Approach to contemplate Me, for I have approached thee by My Being; do not stay far away, for it is I who said: 'We are closer to him (that is to say man) than his jugular vein.' (Koran, L, 15.) Do not condition thyself in calling thyself servant, for if there were no servant, there would be no Lord; thou hast manifested Me as I have manifested thee; without thy condition of servant, My Lordship would not be apparent; so thou makest Me to exist, as I gave existence to thee. Come, My friend, for I want thee as attribute, and I have prepared thee for Me; so do not abandon thyself to another than Myself; I will not abandon thee to another. My friend, smell Me in the odours, eat Me in the food, imagine Me in the imaginable, know Me in the intellections, contemplate Me in the sensible, touch Me in the tangible, wear Me in the clothes! My friend, thou art My goal; through thee one names Me, and it is thee whom one designates when one names Me!" – Are there calls of love more

sweet, caressing or suave?

To others – amongst those who have realised the Divine Word – God speaks through the mouth of the creature; the servant hears the word come from somewhere, and he recognizes at the same time that it comes from nowhere; the sound reaches him from the creature, but he hears it emanate from God.

Occupied with Laylâ, I am distracted by another.
When I see an inanimate thing, I speak to it as to Her.
It is not astonishing that I address myself to others
As to inanimate things, but it is astonishing that they reply.

Amongst those who have realised the Divine Word there are some that God takes from the corporal world towards the world of spirits; they occupy the supreme rank (of this spiritual category). Some of these hear God speak to them in their heart; others are elevated in their spirit towards the inferior firmament, others again to the second or third firmament, following that which has been predestined for them. Some are elevated as far as the 'Lotus-Tree of the Extreme Limit' *(sidrat al-muntahâ)* where God speaks to them. Now, each of those who participate in this Divine Quality hears God speak according to his proper penetration of the Essential Realities, for God puts each thing in its place.

With some, the manifestation of the Divine Word is accompanied by whirlwinds of light.

To others will be prepared a chair *(minbar)* of light.

Others see a light in their interior, the Word emanating from this light; they see more or less light, a rounded light or an elongated light.

Others again see a spiritual form who speaks to them. But all that is called a manifestation of the Divine Word only if God teaches us that it is He Himself who speaks; now, that requires no proof, for one knows immediately. It is thus particularly for the Divine Word, which is not at all hidden: he who knows that all he hears is the Divine Word, will ask for neither proof nor explanation; it is only through the auditive knowledge that the servant recognizes the Divine Word.

To some who are elevated up to the 'Lotus-Tree of the Extreme Limit' it will be said: "My friend, thy me *(aniyah)* is My Thee *(huwiyah)*; thou art the Essence of Him and He is none other than Me. My friend, it is by My work that thou art unfolded, and by My Unicity that thou art differentiated, but the work that thou art

unfolds Me, and thine ignorance covers Me. I am thy goal; I am thine, not Mine; thou art My goal; thou art Mine, not thine. My friend, thou art the point which the circumference of existence has for centre, so that thou art the adorer in it and adore it at the same time. Thou art the light, thou art the manifestation; thou art the beauty *(al-ḥusn)* and the ornament *(az-zayn)*; thou art as the eye with respect to the man and as the man with respect to the eye (or to the Essence: *al-'ayn)*."

Oh spirit of the spirit, oh 'Supreme Sign'![102]
Oh relief of sorrows for the burning liver!
Oh end of hopes, ultimate goal of desires,
What is there sweeter and more real for me than Thy words!
Oh Kaaba of realisation *(taḥqîq)*, oh *qiblah*[103] of purity,
Oh Mount Arafat[104] of the invisible, oh dawn of dazzling beauty;
We have given up ourselves to Thee; we have established Thee
director of the kingdom of our being.
All this world and the one beyond are at Thy disposition.
'If it was not for Thee, we would not be.
And if it was not for me, Thou wouldst not be.
It is thus that Thou art and that we are;
And the Essential Reality is not perceived.
It is Thee whom we reach for through the indigent, –
and there is no indigence!

Amongst those who realise the Divine Word, some understand hidden things; so they have knowledge of events before they happen, be it that they know in reply to their questions, – and it is that which happens the most often, – be it that God warns them on His own initiative.

Others – of those who realise this Divine Quality – ask for miracles, and God gratifies them, so that they have proof of Him when they return to their corporal conscience while still keeping their attitude towards God. – May these examples suffice for that which is the participation of the Divine Word.

We return then to the unveiling of the Divine Qualities in general. Amongst those who contemplate them, there are some

[102] Koranic expression: the archangel Gabriel showed to the Prophet 'the Supreme Sign', (Koran, LIII, 17).

[103] The ritual direction in which one prays.

[104] Sacred mountain near Mecca, where Adam and Eve found each other after their expulsion from Paradise.

to whom God reveals Himself by the Volitive Quality *(al-irâdah)*, so that the creatures are in proportion to the will of the servant. The fact is that on receiving the Divine revelation in the Quality of the Word, the servant *wants*, by the Unity of this Quality, that which he realises of the creatures, and it is thus that things exist by his will. Many of those who attain this state of contemplation draw back, so that they end by denying that which they have perceived of God. The servant who, ravished in the world of Divine Mystery, has contemplated things, in an Essential vision, as existing by his own will, and who then returns to his exterior conscience, is tempted to look again for this same relationship between himself and things (on the individual plane); then, as he does not find it again, he rejects his Essential contemplation and goes backwards; immediately the glass which contains the lamp of his heart is broken, and he comes to deny God after having contemplated Him, to lose Him after having found Him.

To others – of those who contemplate the Divine Qualities – God reveals Himself by the Quality of the All Powerful *(al-qudrah)*, so that things are constituted in the non-manifested world, by the will of the contemplative, and all that the individual world contains conforms to his model . . . It is in this state that I heard the sound of the Bell (that the Prophet heard at the time of the revelation); then my composition was dissolved, my contours disappeared and my name was effaced. I was under the intense ascendancy which seized me, like an old gown that is caught on a high tree and a powerful wind carries away shred by shred. I could see objectively *(shuhûdan)* only lightning, thunder, clouds from which rained lights and oceans where waves were of fire. "The heavens and the earth drew together the one against the others", and I found myself in the "darknesses upon darknesses". The Power did not cease to tear away from me one faculty after another, and to transpierce one desire after another, until the Divine Majesty struck me down, and the Supreme Beauty gushed out by the needle's eye of the imagination; then was loosened, in the Supreme Aspect, the clasping of the right Hand. At once things came into existence; the darkness ceased, and after the ark was seated on the Mount Jûdi[105], one heard a cry: "Oh you, heaven and earth, come to Us whether you like it or not! They replied: we come obediently." (Koran, XLI, 10) . . .

[105] The summit of the Caucasus, where the ark of Noah landed after the flood.

OF THE UNVEILING *(majlâ)* OF THE ESSENCE

It is of the purity of wine which the Essence enjoys in thee;
All union outside of It is but dispersion.
It unveils Itself transcendent with regard to all description,
Without analogy and without there being in It any relations.
As the rising sun effaces the light of the planets,
While they subsist fundamentally by it,
It is darkness without day and without twilight,
But outside Its home the flock wanders in the desert.
May the unsurpassable limits be shown to the caravan which leans towards It!
So that it remains perplexed with regard to It and does not grasp the characters.
Hidden are the paths towards It, neither contours nor wisdom will betray It.
It refuses intimacy; Its proud beauties will defend It.
A covered way, effaced and narrow, leads towards It;
It is on one side that the illusioned traveller stops.
Like ignorance, It levels the sciences of the worlds;
In its breast, guidance and bewilderment are equal.
Never can intellect overcome purity to blend with It;
Never thought smell Its heady perfume.
The fire that guides remains ignorant of Its tracks;
The trustworthy light does not light Its paths.
The most perplexed of the perplexed demonstrates It the most clearly;
For they do not live in It nor die.
Its Qualities are drowned in the Ocean of Its Glory,
Without dying they die in Its depths.
Nothing answers the question: what is It?
Neither name nor attribute; the Essence is too sublime for that.

Know that the Essence *(adh-dhât)* signifies the Absolute Being in its state of being stripped of all connection, relation, assignation and aspect. It is not that all these are situated outside the Absolute Being, on the contrary, all these aspects and all that they

imply are contained in It. They are found there neither individually nor as connections, but they are Essentially the Absolute Being. This is the pure Essence in which are manifested neither Names nor Attributes nor relations nor connections nor anything else. As soon as something is manifested there, the aspect in question is attributed to that which supports this manifestation and not to the pure Essence, since the principle of the Essence is precisely the synthesis of the Universal and individual realities, the assignations and connections, synthesis which is at once their subsistence and their disappearance under the ascendancy of the Unity of the Essence. When one envisages in This a Quality or a Name or some Attribute, it is always by virtue of such a point of view that this Quality exists and not in the Essence as such. It is for that that we say that the Essence is the Absolute Being; we do not say that It is the 'Ancient Being', nor the 'Necessary Being', in order to avoid any condition that would limit It. However, one knows quite well that the Essence is none other than the Essence of which the Being is Necessary and Ancient. Our expression 'Absolute Being' indicates not a single condition, since the meaning of the word 'absolute' is precisely to deny all condition.

Know that the Essence pure and simple possesses, in so far as It 'descends' from Its purity and first simplicity, three irradiations which participate (in a certain manner) in Its purity and simplicity. The first of these irradiations is the Unity *(aḥadiyah)*, in which is manifested nothing of connections, assignations, Names, Qualities, nor any other thing; It is the pure Essence; however, as the idea of Unity is assigned to It, It detaches Itself in a way from the Absolute Simplicity.

The second irradiation is the Aseity *(al-huwiyah)*. In it, none of the things mentioned are manifested, with the exception of Unity; It participates then in the Divine Simplicity, but in a lesser degree than the Unity, for It is characterized by the idea of the non-presence, according to the meaning of the pronoun He *(huwa)* which symbolizes the absent person (in opposition to *me* and *thee*).

The third irradiation is the Divine Me (or the Divine Subject: *aniyah* from *anâ*, 'Me'). Nor is there in It anything manifested except the Aseity, so that It participates equally in the Divine Simplicity, but in a lesser degree than the Aseity, since It is characterized by the idea of personal conscience and of presence,

which results in It being closer to our rank than the Aseity, which implies the idea of the inaccessible and of the unmanifested.

By 'those who have realised the Essence' *(adh-dhâtiyûn)*, one means the men in whom lives the Divine Subtle Reality, in the sense where we were saying that God, when He reveals Himself to His servant and He extinguishes the individuality, establishes in him a Divine Subtle Reality which may be of the nature of the Essence or of the nature of the Divine Qualities. When it is of the nature of the Essence, the human constitution *(haykal)* (where it lives) will be the Unique Perfect Being, the Universal Support, the pole around which existence turns, that to which is addressed the inclining and prostration (in the ritual prayer). Through him God safeguards the world. He is the Mahdî[106], the Seal of the Sainthood and the representant *(al-khalîfah)* of God on earth. It is to him that the story of Adam[107] refers. He influences the realities of existence like the magnet draws the iron. He tames the world by his grandeur, and by his power he does that which he wishes.[108] No single thing is hidden from him, and this because the Divine Subtle Reality, which lives in this Saint, is pure essence, free of all Divine or creaturial condition, so that nothing prevents it from according to each degree of the Divine or created existence the Reality that it has. For that which would prevent the essence from identifying itself to realities is nothing but some condition, Divine or creaturial, which would be imposed on it; but, no constraint exists, since it is pure essence; every thing is found there in act and not only in power, from then on there is no prevention. For the things are contained in the essence of the beings, at one time in power and another time in act[109], following the limitative conditions. These conditions disappear, be it by a glance *(wârid)* which reaches the essence, be it by that which gushes forth spontaneously from this latter. In fact the limiting conditions may be dissolved by a spiritual state

[106] Who must come back before the end of time to re-establish the Tradition.

[107] Who receives 'all the Names' and before whom the Angels must prostrate. (Cf. Koran, II, 28-32.).

[108] One must not lose sight of the fact that the essence of this Unique Being is identical to the Divine Essence, so that there cannot be divergence between him and God. One may say that he does not do what God would not have done, or that God acts through him.

[109] The expression 'power' and 'act' have here but a symbolic value, for as Jîlî points out elsewhere, the essence of man is always 'in act'; it does not ignore its content.

(ḥâl), by an instantaneous intuition *(waqt)*, by a Quality *(ṣîfah)* or again by other actualizations of this order. But, the Essence transcends all that and that is why It "gives to every thing its nature, then guides it". (Koran XX, 52).

If the Men of God were not individually excluded from the unveiling of the Unity *(aḥadiyah)*, even more so from the unveiling of the Essence, we could have talked of the Essence by describing the strange states of revelation and by giving marvellous Divine Essential proofs, pure from all apparition or interference from the Names and the Qualities or any other thing. These proofs, we would bring out from the hidden treasures of the Non-Manifestation by means of non-manifestation keys, and we would spread them out, in return for the subtle and measured expressions, on the evident face of the 'objective' conscience, so that the locks of the intelligences open by the same keys, and the servant glides across the needle's eye of the Way towards the paradise of the Essence which is veiled by the Divine Qualities, and which protects the light and the darkness.[110]

"God guides towards His Light whoever He wants; God gives symbols for men, and God knows everything." (Koran XXIV, 35).

[110] All this passage is paradoxical even ironical, to show that the nature of the Essence will never be available to human intelligence.

Glossary of Arabic Terms

al-abad: eternity without end; see also *al-azal* and *al-qidam*. Cf. pages xv, 6.

al-'abd: the servant, the slave, in religious language designates the adorer, and more generally the creature in so far as it depends on his Lord *(rabb)*. Cf. pages 6, 13.

al-'adam: synonym of *al-'udum*. Cf. page 4 note 10, 18.

al-af'âda: overflow, emanate; see: *fayd*. Cf. page 27 note 73, 35.

al-af'âl: plural of *al-fi'l:* the action, the activity: *al-af'âl al-ilâhiyah:* the Divine Activities. Cf. page xi.

aḥad: One; see: *aḥadiyah*

aḥâdith: plural of *ḥadîth*.

al-aḥadiyah: Unity; in Sufism, the Supreme Unity which is not the object of any distinctive knowledge which therefore is not then accessible to the creature as such; it is only God Himself Who knows His Unity. As a spiritual state, Unity contains the extinction of all traces of the created. Cf. page v note 11, 4, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 31, 54, 56.

aḥkâm: plural of *ḥukm*. Cf. page 16.

aḥwâl: plural of *ḥâl*.

akhlâq: plural of *khulq:* natural, innate character; *al-akhlâq al-ilâhiyah:* the Divine Characters, that is to say the traces of the Divine Presence in the human nature. Cf. page xi.

al-'alîm: the Knowing; Divine Name. Cf. page 39, 43.

al'amâ: the 'dark cloud'; symbol of the state of Absolute Non-Manifestation of the Divine Obscurity. Cf. page 21, 31.

al-amr: The Order, the Command: in theology; The Divine Command, symbolized by the Word of Creation *kun*, "be": "His Command *(amruhu)* when He wishes something, is such that He says to it: be! and it is!" (Koran XXXVI, 81). The Koran speaks also of the Divine "Commands" in the plural: "To Him will return the commands *(umûr)*" – which evidently means that the uncreated essences of things will return to God, for the Divine Commands, by which things have been created, are themselves uncreated. The Command, in the singular,

corresponds to the Verb, the word *amr* having moreover this latter sense in Aramaic. The two following passages from the Koran affirm implicitly the identity of the Divine Command and of the Word *(kalimah)* or Verb: "Jesus is in the eyes of God that which Adam is. God formed him of dust, then He said: be! *(kun)*! and he was" (III, 54): "The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is the messenger of God and His Word *(kalimatuhu)* which he projected on Mary, and His Spirit . ." (IV, 170). *Al-amr* often takes the meaning 'reality', 'act', 'actual thing'; the Divine Command corresponds to the pure Act. Cf. page 35.

al-aniyah: derived from the pronoun *anâ*, 'me', and meaning the subject, esp. the Divine Subject which is opposed logically to the 'aseity' *(al-huwiyah)*. Cf. page xv, xx, 21, 50, 54.

al-'âqil: the Knower, the Intelligent. The ternary *al-'âqil* (the Knower), *al-ma'qûl* (the known), *al-'aql* (the intellect, the knowledge) plays an important role in metaphysics.

al-'aql: the intellect: *al-'aql al-awwal:* the First Intellect, analogous to the Supreme Pen *(al-qalam)* and to *ar-rûh:* it corresponds to the Plotinian *Noûs*. Cf. page xviii

al-ârifu bi-Llâh: 'the Knower through God', the gnostic (according to the sense that an Evagrius the Pontic or a Maximus the Confessor gives to the word gnosis). Cf. page 19 note 57.

al-'arsh: The Divine Throne; it is sometimes identified with the Universal Spirit *(ar-rûh)*. Cf. page 29.

asmâ: plural of *ism:* name: *al-asmâ al-ilâhiyah* are the Divine Names, which subdivide themselves in *asmâ dhâtiyah*, 'Essential Names', that is to say Names which express the pure transcendence of the Essence, and *asma ṣifatiyah* 'Qualifying Names', which express the Universal Qualities; these last comprise equally the *asmâ af'âliyah*, the Names expressing the Divine Activities. Cf. page xi, 3.

asmâ al-husnâ: 'The most beautiful Names' or 'the Names of Beauty'; Koranic expression which designates the Divine Names. Cf. page xi.

ayâm Allâh: the Days of God, that is to say the six days of the creation with the seventh day of rest. Cf. page xv.

al-a'yân: plural of *'ayn:* the essences or first determinations of things; *al-a'yân ath-thâbitah:* the 'immutable essences' or

principial possibilities, the Archetypes. Cf. page 7 note 25.

al-'ayn: the Essence, the first determination, the Eye, the Source; *al-'ayn ath-thâbitah* sometimes also simply *al-'ayn:* the immutable essence, the Archetype, the principial possibility of a being or a thing. Cf. page v, 7 note 25, 21, 23, 30, 51.

al-azal: the Eternity without beginning; see also *al-abad* and *al-qidam*. Cf. page xv, 6.

al-'azamah: The Divine Immensity, the Grandeur; corresponds to the Name *al-'azîm*. Cf. pages 6, 29.

al-'azîm: the Great, the Immense; Divine Name. Cf. page 11.

al-'azîz: the Great, the Precious, the Dear; Divine Name. Cf. page 11.

baqâ: subsistence, durance; designates in Sufism the spiritual state of the subsistence outside all form, that is to say the reintegration in the Spirit or even in the pure Being; signifies also the Divine Eternity. Opposite: *fanâ*. Cf. page 39.

al-bâri: lit. the Producer, the Creator. Cf. page 3.

al-baṣar: the sight (as faculty), the Divine Sight; see also: *aṣ-ṣifat an-nâfsiyah*. Cf. pages xv, 48.

bâtin: interior, hidden; oppposite of *zâhir:* exterior, apparent. One distinguishes 'interior science' *(al-ilm al-bâtin)* meaning the esoteric, Sufi science, from the 'exterior science' *(al-'ilm az-zâhir)* of the doctors of the Law. *Al-bâtin*, 'the Interior' is one of the Koranic Names of God. Cf. pages 6, 8, 21, 42.

butûn: Interiority, non-manifestation; corresponds to the Divine Name *al-bâtin*. Cf. page 19.

adh-dhât: the Essence, the Quiddity. The *dhât* of a being is the subject to which all its Qualities are referred *(ṣifat);* the qualities differ amongst themselves, but not in their attachment to same subject. Cf. pages vii, 3, 53.

adh-dhâtiyûn: those who have realised the Essence *(adh-dhât)*. Cf. page 55.

adh-dhawq: the savour, figuratively: the intuition, above all the intuition of the Divine Qualities. Cf. page 14.

dhu-l-jalâli wa-l-ikrâm: 'the Lord of the Majesty and of the Generosity'; Divine Name. Cf. page 15.

ad-dunya: the inferior world, that is to say the corporal world;

corollary of *al-ukhrâ:* the beyond, the future world. Cf. page 6.

al-fanâ: the extinction, the evanescence; designates in Sufism the extinction of individual limits in the state of Union with God. Opposite: *al-baqâ*, 'the subsistence'. See the Koranic verse: "Everything on it (that is to say the world) is perishable *(fân)* there will remain only the Face of thy Lord, Essence of Majesty and Generosity." (LV, 26-27). Cf. pages 14, 19, 39.

fanâ'ul-fanâ: the extinction of the (spiritual) extinction; corresponds to the Hindu term *pari-nirvâna*.

al-faqîr ilâ-Llâh: 'the poor towards God', according to the Koranic expression; "O you men, you are the poor *(fuqarâ)* towards God, and God is the Rich, the Glorious" (XXXV, 16); in particular, every man following a contemplative way is called *faqîr ilâ-Llâh* or simply *faqîr*; the Persian equivalent is 'dervish'. The application of the name of 'fakir' to certain ascetics of low category exhibited in public places in India comes from a corruption of the original sense of the term. Cf. page iv.

al-fard: The Singular, the Incomparable; Divine Name. Cf. page 11.

al-fâtihah: 'He who opens', the first verse of the Koran, ritual prayer of Islam. Cf. page 26 note 71.

al-fayd: the overflowing, the out-flowing, the flood, the effusion, the emanation; *al-fayd al-aqdas;* 'the most Saintly effusion,' the principial manifestation. Cf. page v note 9.

al-fikr: thought. Cf. page xviii note 4.

al-furqân: the discrimination; Koranic Name for the Revealed Book – or of the revelation in general – under the aspect of Law. See also: *al-qur'an*. Cf. pages xvi, 10 note 28, 17, 23.

al-ghayb: the Mystery, the Non-Manifested. Cf. pages 4, 47, 48 note 101.

al-ghayb al-mutlaq: The Absolute Mystery, the Pure Non-manifestation. Cf. page 47 note 101.

al-ḥadîth: the ephemeral; opposite of *al-qadîm*. Cf. page 18.

ḥadîth: sentence, word of the Prophet transmitted outside of the Koran by a chain of known intermediaries; there are two sorts of *aḥâdith: ḥadîth qudsi* (Sacred Sentence) designates a direct revelation, where God speaks in the first person through the

mouth of the Prophet; *ḥadîth nabawî* (Prophetic Sentence) designates an indirect revelation, where the Prophet speaks by himself. Cf. pages xx, 9 note 27, 18, 19 note 55, 24 note 65.

al-hâhût: the Essential Nature of God; derived from the Divine Name *huwa*, 'He', and formed by analogy with the following terms, which we cite according to their descending hierarchical order:
al-lâhût: the Divine Nature (creative).
al-jabarût: the Power, the Divine Immensity, the informal world.
al-malakût: the Angelic Reign, the Spiritual World.
an-nâsût: human nature, notably the corporal form of man.

al-ḥâl: plural: *aḥwal:* state, spritual state: one opposes sometimes *ḥâl* (state) to *maqâm* (spiritual station): in this case, the first is considered as passing, the second as stable. Cf. pages xi, 56.

al-ḥaqâïq: plural of *ḥaqîqah*. Cf. pages xix, 26, 28, 39.

al-ḥaqîqah: the Truth, the Reality, in Sufism: the Divine Truth or Reality, the essential reality of a thing, Cf. the word of the Prophet: *likulli dhi ḥaqqin ḥaqîqah*, "to every real thing there corresponds a Divine Reality (or Truth)". Cf. pages 2, 3, 40 note 93, 43 note 96, 49.

ḥaqîqat al-ḥaqâïq: 'The Truth of truths' or the 'Reality of realities,' analogous to the Word; it is considered as an ungraspable 'isthmus' *(barzakh)*, the intermediary between the Divine One and the world. Cf. page 31.

al-ḥaqq: the Truth or the Reality; in Sufism, *al-ḥaqq* designates the Divinity in so far as it is distinguished from the creature *(al-khalq)*. See also: *ḥaqîqah*. Cf. pages 6, 16 note 43, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28 note 75, 29, 39, 41.

al-ḥarf: singular of *ḥurûf*. Cf. page 7.

al-ḥayâh: life. Cf. page xv.

haykal: temple, corporal form. Cf. pages 30, 45, 46, 55.

al-ḥayrah: consternation, perplexity. Cf. page 19.

al-ḥayy: the Living; Divine Name. Cf. page 11.

al-ḥikam: plural of *ḥikmah*,wisdom.

al-ḥikmah: wisdom. Cf. page 6.

al-ḥimmah: Spiritual Will, the force of decision, aspiration towards God. Cf. pages xviii note 4, 14.

al-ḥudûth: ephemeral; opposite of *al-qidam* (the eternity). Cf. pages 4, 6.

al-ḥukm: the principle, the judgement. Cf. page 6.

ḥulûl: 'localization'; the heresy which consists in englobing God in this manifestation. Islam rejects the notion of 'incarnation' as is suggested in *ḥulûl*. Cf. pages 29, 45.

al-ḥurûf: the letters of the alphabet and, following, the sounds that they represent. Cf. page 16 note 44.

al-ḥusn: beauty. Cf. page 51.

huwa: 'He', Divine Name. Cf. page xv, 54.

al-huwiyah: derived from the pronoun *huwa*,'He': the Ipseity, the Divine Aseity, the Supreme 'One'. Cf. pages x, xv, 3, 21, 33, 50, 54.

al-idhn: the permission. Cf. page xv, 36.

idrâk: perception; figuratively: intellection. Cf. page 14, note 38.

al-ijmâl: integration. Cf. page 45.

ilâh: Divinity. Cf. page 16 note 42

al-'ilm: knowledge, science. Cf. pages xv, 6, 12, 47.

imâm: model, prototype; ritually: he who presides over the public prayer; head of a religious community. Cf. page xi.

al-imâm al-mubîn: the evident Model; Koranic name for the eternal Book, or the prototype of created beings. Cf. page 23.

al-imkân: the possibility, that is to say the possibility as category, the principle of the possibility; a particular possibility: *mumkin*. Cf. page 6.

al-insân al-kâmil: 'Perfect Man' or 'Universal Man'; Sufi term for he who has realised all the degrees of the One; also designates the permanent prototype of man. Cf. pages i, iii, viii.

al-irâdah: The Will. Cf. page xv, 52.

ishârah: allusion; symbolism. Cf. page 4.

al-ism: the Name; plural: *al-asmâ*. Cf. page xi.

al-ithbât: affirmation. Cf. page 23.

al-ittiṣâf biṣîfât il-ilâhiyah: the 'assimilation of the Divine Qualities' or 'the assimilation to the Divine Qualities'; see also *ṣifat*. Cf. page xii.

al-'iyân: the direct vision; in Sufism: the immediate knowledge, not discursive. Cf. page 4, 14.

al-jabarût: the World of the All-Powerful or the Divine Immensity; see also *hâhût*. Cf. page v.

al-jamâl: Beauty. Cf. page xv.

al-jalâl: Majesty. Cf. page xv.

al-jawhar al-fard: 'The Singular Jewel', the incorruptible Essence of the Being, the First Intellect. Cf. page 6 note 19.

al-kalâm: the discourse, the faculty of the Word. Cf. pages xv, 49.

al-kamâl: Perfection, Plenitude; in connection with God: Infinity. Cf. pages xv, 3, 5, 12, 20, 29.

al-kamâl al-haqqî: The Divine Perfection, the Divine Infinity. Cf. page 12.

al-karîm: the Generous, the Noble; Divine Name. Cf. page xi.

al-kashf: lit: the becoming naked, the lifting of the veil; in Sufism: the Essential Knowledge, direct intuition. Cf. pages 14, 41.

khalaqa: to create: see also *khalq*.

al-khalîfah: the Representative. Cf. page 55.

al-khalq: creation, creature; see also: *al-ḥaqq*. Cf. pages 6, 16, 18, 28 note 75.

al-khayâl: the faculty of imagination; it is purely passive, be it with regard to the faculty of conjecture *(al-wahm)*, which confers on it the character of illusion, be it with regard to the intellect *(al-'aql)* or the Spirit *(ar-rûḥ)*, which may imprint upon it prophetic visions. Cf. page xviii note 4.

khayr al-khalq: the best of the creation, (the Prophet). Cf. page iv.

al-kibrît al-aḥmar: the red sulphur, chemical symbol of the permanent activity of the Spirit. Cf. page 5.

al-kitâb: the Book, the Revealed Book. Cf. page 36.

al-kitâb al-majîd: the glorious Book: one of the Koranic names of the Revealed Book. Cf. page 17.

al-kitâb al-maknûn: the hidden Book; Koranic name of the

Eternal Book. Cf. page 23.

al-kunh: intimate foundation, primordial. Cf. page 4.

al-kursî: the Pedestal, the stool, (on which the two feet of God rest, according to the anthropomorphic symbolism). One may distinguish between the Throne *(al-'arsh)* and the Pedestal. The first corresponds to the 'support' of the Divine manifestation, total and undifferentiated, whereas the second symbolizes a first differentiation of the Divine manifestation, a differentiation which expresses precisely the duality of the two Feet. The Throne and the Pedestal may be considered as two aspects or degrees of the Universal Spirit *(ar-rûḥ).* Cf. page xvii , 29.

lâ-ilâha illa-Allâh: "There is no Divinity but the One Divinity"; the fundamental form of Islam. Cf. page 5 note 14, 6 note 22.

latîf: subtle, fine, gentle, imperceptible. Cf. page 45 note 100.

al-lûḥ al-maḥfuz: the Guarded Table, where God inscribes the destinies of all the beings by the Supreme Pen *(al-qalam al-a'lâ)*: Koranic symbol of the Universal Substance. Cf. page xvii.

mâhiyatu kunhi-dh-dhât: 'the Quiddity of the intimate nature of the Essence.' The word *mâhiyah* is derived from the relative interrogative pronoun *mâ*, 'that', 'what', and means, according to the most general acceptance: 'that of which is made'. *Kunh* is translated either by 'primordial foundation', 'intimate nature', or by 'extreme limit'. The expression *mâhiyatu kuni-dh-dhât* concerns the passive aspect of the One, it is the most elevated transposition of the notions of substance. Cf. page 17.

maḥsûs: 'sensible' – that which is the object of the 'sensible' *knowledge (al-ḥiss),* That which is sensed) Cf. page viii.

majlâ: place of irradiation, or revelation, plane of reflection of the Divine *tajallî,* theatre. Cf. page 53.

al-malakût: the permanent Sovereignty, the celestial Angelic reign; cf. the Koranic verse: "It is He that holds in His Hand the Sovereignty *(malakût)* of everything . . ." (XXXVI, 83.) See also *hâhût.* Cf. page v.

al-malik: the King; Divine Name. Cf. pages 17, 26 note 71, 39, 43.

al-malikiyah: Royalty, Divine Aspect corresponding to the Name *al-malik* Cf. pages 29.

al-maqâm: the spiritual station; see also: *al-ḥâl*. CF. page 36.

ma'qûl: intelligible, that which is the object of the intellect *('aql)*, known. See also: *al-âqil*. Cf. page viii.

al-ma'rifah: knowledge, gnosis; *al-ma'rifah* (knowledge), *al-mahabbah* (love) and *al-makhâfah* (fear) constitute the Sufi ternary of the motives or qualities leading towards God. Cf. page 6.

mashhad: place of witness, contemplative state: See also *mushahadah*. Cf. pages ix, 35.

mathal: analogous, similar.

al-mawṣuf: the Quality, the subject of a quality *(ṣifah)*. Cf. page 11.

al-mawjûd: he who exists, that which exists: See also *wujûd*. Cf. page 39.

mazâhir: plural of *mazhar*. Cf. page 16.

mazhar: place of manifestation; correlative of *zuhûr:* manifestation, and of *zâhir*. Cf. pages 9, 21.

minbar: pulpit used in the mosques for the Friday sermon. Cf. page 50.

al-mu'âyanah: the direct vision; the immediate knowledge; analogous to *'iyan*. Cf. page 41.

al-muḥaqqiq: he who has realised the Truth *(al-ḥaqq)*; plural: al-muḥaqqiqûn. Cf. pages 11, 12.

al-muḥyi: the Lifegiver: He who gives life; Divine Name. Cf. page xi.

al-mumît: He who gives death; Divine Name. Cf. page xi.

al-mumkinât: plural of *mumkin;* the possibilities: one distinguishes in logic between *mumkin* (possible), *wâjib* (necessary), and *jâïz* (contingent); from the metaphysical point of view, the possible is brought principially to the necessary, since all possibility has necessarily the reality which it contains by its nature. Cf. page 6 note 20.

al-mun'im: the Beneficent; Divine Name. Cf. page 23.

al-muntaqim: the Revenger; Divine Name. Cf. page 23.

mushâhadah: contemplation. Cf. page ix.

al-muta'âlî: He who is Himself lifted (above the ephemeral);

Divine Name. Cf. page 20.

nafas ar-raḥmân: the 'Breath of the Clement', also called *an-nafas ar-raḥmânî:* the 'Compassionate Breath': the Divine Mercy considered as the principle manifesting and parting as the almost maternal power of God. See also *raḥmah*. Cf. page 27 note 73

an-nafs: the soul, the psyche. Cf. page xv.

an-nafs al-ilâhiyah: the Divine Person, that is to say God in so far as He is endowed with the Qualities such as Life, Will, Power, Word, etc. Cf. pages xix, 5, 43.

an-nafy: the negation. Cf. page 23.

an-nahy: forbidden, interdiction. Cf. page 35.

an-naqṣ al-khalqî: the creaturial imperfection. Cf. page 12.

an-ni'mah: grace, beatitude. Cf. page 23.

nisab: plural of *nisbah:* relation, descendence. Cf. page ix.

an-nûr: the Light; Divine Name. Cf. page xii.

al-qadîm: the Ancient of the Days, the Eternal; opposite term to *al-ḥadîth:* the ephemeral. Cf. pages 18, 41.

al-qâdir: the Powerful; Divine Name. See also: *al-qadr*. Cf. pages 39, 43.

al-qadr: Power, predestination, the measure of power inherent in a thing.

al-qahr: constraint; corresponds to the Divine Name *al-qahhâr;* the Victorious, the Tamer. Cf. page 29.

al-qâïmu bi-dhâtihi: He who subsists by Himself. Cf. page 18.

al-qalam al-a'lâ: the Supreme Pen: opposite to the Guarded Table *(al-lûḥ al-maḥfûz)*. Cf. page xvii.

al-qalb: the heart; the organ of supra-rational intuition, which corresponds to the heart as thought corresponds to the brain. The fact that modern people localize in the heart not intellectual intuition but sentiment, proves that this occupies in them the centre of individuality. Cf. page xvii.

qasîdah: ode. Cf. page 28

al-qayyûm: the Subsistent; Divine Name. Cf. page 44.

al-qiblah: the ritual direction in which one prays. Cf. page 51.

al-qidam: Eternity, Antiquity; opposite to *al-ḥudûth*. Cf. pages xv, 6.

al-quddus: the Most Saintly; Divine Name. Cf. pages xi, 42.

al-qudrah: the Divine Power. Cf. pages 12, 29, 35, 52.

al-qur'ân: the Koran. Lit. 'the recitation', 'the reading'. Cf. pages xvi, 17.

al-qutb: the pole; in Sufism: the Pole of a spiritual hierarchy. One speaks of the 'Pole of the Time'. Cf. page xvi.

al-quwwah: force. Cf. page 6.

ar-rabb: the Lord; term correlative to *al-'abd*, the servant. Cf. pages 6, 19, 26 note 71, 39, 43.

ar-rafraf al-a'lâ: 'The Supreme Baldaquins'; the expression *rafraf*, 'baldaquins', is often mentioned in the Koranic descriptions of Paradise; the 'Supreme Baldaquins' symbolize a living place of the Divine Glory, that is to say a degree of the informal manifestation. Cf. pages xvii, 29.

raḥim: womb. Cf. page 26 note 69.

ar-raḥîm: He who is Merciful (towards beings), active form of the root RḤM; see also *ar-raḥmah*. Cf. pages 12 note 32, 26 note 71, 30.

ar-raḥmah: the (Divine) Mercy; the same root RḤM is found again in the two Divine Names: *ar-raḥmân* (The Compassionate, He whose Mercy englobes all things) and *ar-raḥîm* (The Merciful, He who saves by His Grace); the most simple word from the same root is *raḥim:* womb, from whence comes the maternal aspect of the Divine Names. Cf. pages 12 note 32, 27, 30.

ar-raḥmân: The Clement, He whose nature is Merciful *(raḥmah)*; see also *ar-raḥîm*. Cf. pages xi, 5 note 15, 8, 12, 19, 23, 26 note 69, 27, 29, 36, 43, 48.

ar-raḥmâniyah: The Merciful Beatitude; the integral Divine Quality, corresponding to the Divine Name *ar-raḥmân*. Cf. pages 17, 26, 27, 29, 30 note 79, 48.

rasûl: envoy, messenger; in Theology: Divine envoy. It is as a messenger *(rasûl)* that a prophet *(nabî)* promulgates a new sacred law; every prophet is not necessarily *rasûl*, although participating in Divine Inspiration, but every *rasûl* is

implicitly *nabî*. Cf. page v note 8.

ar-rijlayn wa an-na'layn: 'The two Feet and the two Sandals'; anthropomorphic symbols of the Divine Aspects or manifestations. Jîlî interprets the two Feet as two polar aspects of the Essence, and the two Sandals as the "traces" of this polarity in creation. Cf. page xvii

ar-rubûbiyah: the Lordship; Divine Aspect corresponding to the Name *ar-rabb*, the Lord. Cf. pages 14, 17, 29.

ar-rûḥ: the Spirit; in Sufism, this word contains the following principal significations:

1) The Divine Spirit, therefore un-created *(ar-rûḥ al-ilâhî)*, called also *(ar-rûḥ al-quds)* the Holy Spirit.

2) The Universal Spirit, created *(ar-rûḥ al-kullî)*.

3) The individual spirit or more exactly, polarized spirit with regard to an individual.

4) The vital spirit, intermediary between the body and the soul. Cf. the Koranic verse: "They will question thee on the subject of the spirit; tell them: the spirit emerges (comes) from the command *(amr)* of my Lord . . ." (XVII, 84). Christ is called *rûḥ Allâh*, 'Spirit of God'. Cf. pages xvii, xviii note 4, xix, 45.

as-salâm: Peace; Divine Name. Cf. page xi.

ṣalṣalat al-jaras: 'the ringing of the bell', subtle sound that the Prophet heard at the time of the revelation of the Koran. Cf. page xvi.

as-sam': hearing. Cf. pages xv, 48.

aṣ-ṣamad: The Independent, on which everything depends. Divine Name. Cf. pages xi, 11.

as-sarîr: the bed of rest; Koranic expression symbolizing a 'dwelling place' of Divine Glory, that is to say a degree of the principial and informal manifestation. Cf. page xvii

shahâdah: witnessing, particularly the witness that "there is no Divinity but The Divinity". Cf pages xvi, 23 note 63.

ash-shahâdah: the 'objective' state, corporeal. Cf. page 48 note 101.

sharî'ah: the Sacred Law, revealed. Every Divine Messenger *(rasûl)* brings a new *sharî'ah* in conformity with the conditions of the cosmic and human cycle. This opposes *shari'ah al-ḥaqîqah*, Sacred Law of the Truth or Divine Realities; the Sac-

red Laws differ, whereas their Divine Reality remains the same.

ash-shuhûd: the Conscience, the Quality of Witness.

shuhûdan: 'sensibly', objectively, in an evident manner. Cf. pages 13, 52.

sidrat al-muntahâ: The Lotus Tree of the extreme limit; Koranic symbol of Supreme Paradise. (LIV, 14 SQQ). Cf. pages xvi, 50.

aṣ-ṣîfah: the Quality; see also ṣîfât. Cf. pages 56.

aṣ-ṣîfât: the Qualities or Attributes; aṣ-ṣîfât al ilâhiyah: the Divine Qualities or Attributes. See also *dhât*. Cf. pages vii, 3, 11.

aṣ-ṣîfât al-af'âliyah: the (Divine) Qualities which correspond to the Activities; see : *al-af'âl*. Cf. page 12.

aṣ-ṣîfât an-nafsiyah: the Qualities of the (Divine) Person; see: *an-nafs al-ilâhiyah*. Cf. page 12.

as-sunnah: the sacred custom, that is to say the totality of the prescriptions which do not result directly from the Koran, but which are established through the example of the Prophet. Cf. page 36.

aṣ-ṣûrah: the form; *aṣ-ṣûrat al-ilâhiyah:* the Divine Form, that is to say the totality of the Divine Qualities or Attributes. Cf. page iii note 3.

aṣ-ṣûrat al-muḥammadiyah: 'the Mohammedan Form' that is to say the Universal Prototype of the Prophet, identified with the principle of Light *(an-nûr)* from which the world was created. Cf. page xix

tafakkur: meditation, reflection *(fikr:* thought). Cf. pages ix, xviii.

taḥqîq: realisation; *taḥqîq dhâtî:* essential realisation, identification with the Essence. Cf. pages ix, 4, 51.

at-tajallî: the unveiling, the revelation, the irradiation. (When the sun is unveiled, its light radiates on the earth). Cf. pages vii, xiv, xvii, 13, 19, 32, 33 note 83, 39, 45.

tajalliyât: plural of *tajallî*.

tanazzul: (plural: *tanazzulât)* lit. 'descent'; term designating the Divine Revelation, in the Universal Order as well as in the order of spiritual manifestations. Cf. pages 17, 21.

tanzîh: distancing, exaltation, affirmation of the Divine Transcendence; contrary: *tashbîh:* comparison, similitude, affirmation of symbolism. The two affirmations are to be found united in the Koranic words thus: "Nothing is like unto Him (= *tanzîh)*, and it is He who hears and who sees." (= *tashbîh)*. Cf. page xiv.

tashbîh: analogy, symbolism; see also: *tanzîh*. Cf. page xiv.

at-tawḥid: affirmation of the Unity, of *wâḥid:* Unique. Commonly known as *at-tawḥid*, signifies the pronouncement of the Moslem credo, the recognition of the Divine Unity; in Sufism *at-tawḥid* summarizes all the degrees of the knowledge of the Unity. Cf. pages v note 11, 9.

al-'udum: sometimes also called *'adam:* the non-existence; absence, the Non-Being, the non-existence. In Sufism, this expression comprises on one hand a positive sense, that of non-manifestation, the principial state, situating itself beyond existence or even beyond the One, and on the other hand, a negative sense, that of privation, of relative non-existence.

al-ukhra: the beyond, the future life, the totality of posthumous states. Cf. page 6.

al-ulûhiyah: word derived from *ilâh* 'Divinity', and signifying the 'God-Quality' or 'Quality of Divinity', not in the sense of a particular Divine Quality, but as total Divine Nature. Cf. pages 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 28.

umm al-kitâb: the Mother of the Book, that is to say the Eternal Prototype of the Revealed Book; Koranic expression. Cf. pages xv, 16.

al-waḥdah: the (Divine) Solitude; it is situated ontologically between *al-aḥadiyah*, the Supreme Unity, and *al-wâḥidiyah*, the distinctive Unicity. Cf. page v, 23.

wâḥid: Unique, alone; see: *wâḥidiyah*. Cf. pages 11, 17 note 47, 41.

al-wâḥidiyah: the (Divine) Unicity; it is distinguished from the Divine Unity, *(aḥadiyah)* which is abstracted from all distinctive knowledge, whereas the Unicity appears in the differentiated, in the same way that the principial distinctions appear in it. Cf. pages vi, 9, 17, 18, 23, 24.

al-wahm: the conjectural faculty; opinion; see also; *al-khayâl*. Cf.

page xviii note 4.

wajh Allâh: the Face of God; the transcendent Essence of everything. Cf. the Koranic verses: "Everything that is on it, (that is to say the earth) is evanescent; there will be subsistent only the Face of thy Lord, Essence of Majesty and of Generosity." Cf. page 24 note 67.

wârid: perceived, sudden inspiration; this may be of diverse qualities and origins. Cf. page 55.

al-waqt: the moment, the instant; in Sufism: the present in so far as it reflects eternity. One says: "The Sufi is the son of the instant *(ibn al-waqt)*", to express that he lives neither in the past nor in the future, but in the actual conscience of the Divine Presence. Cf. pages 15, 56.

al-wiḥdah: the (Divine) Solitude; synonymous with *al-waḥdah*. Cf. page v.

al-wujûb: the necessity; necessary: *wâjib*. Cf. page 6 note 20.

al-wujûd: the Being, existence; *al-wujûd al-mahd:* the Pure Being (One). Cf. pages 3 note 1, 6, 18, 19.

al-wujûd as-sâri: the all penetrating One. Cf. page 28.

zahara: to appear, to be manifested; see also: *zâhir*.

zâhir: apparent exterior; opposite to *bâtin;* see under this word. *az-zâhir* 'the Exterior' or 'the Apparent' is one of the Koranic Names of God. Cf. pages 6, 8, 22, 42.

az-zayn: the ornament, (physical) beauty. Cf. page 51.

zuhûr: manifestation, apparition. Cf. page 22.